



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

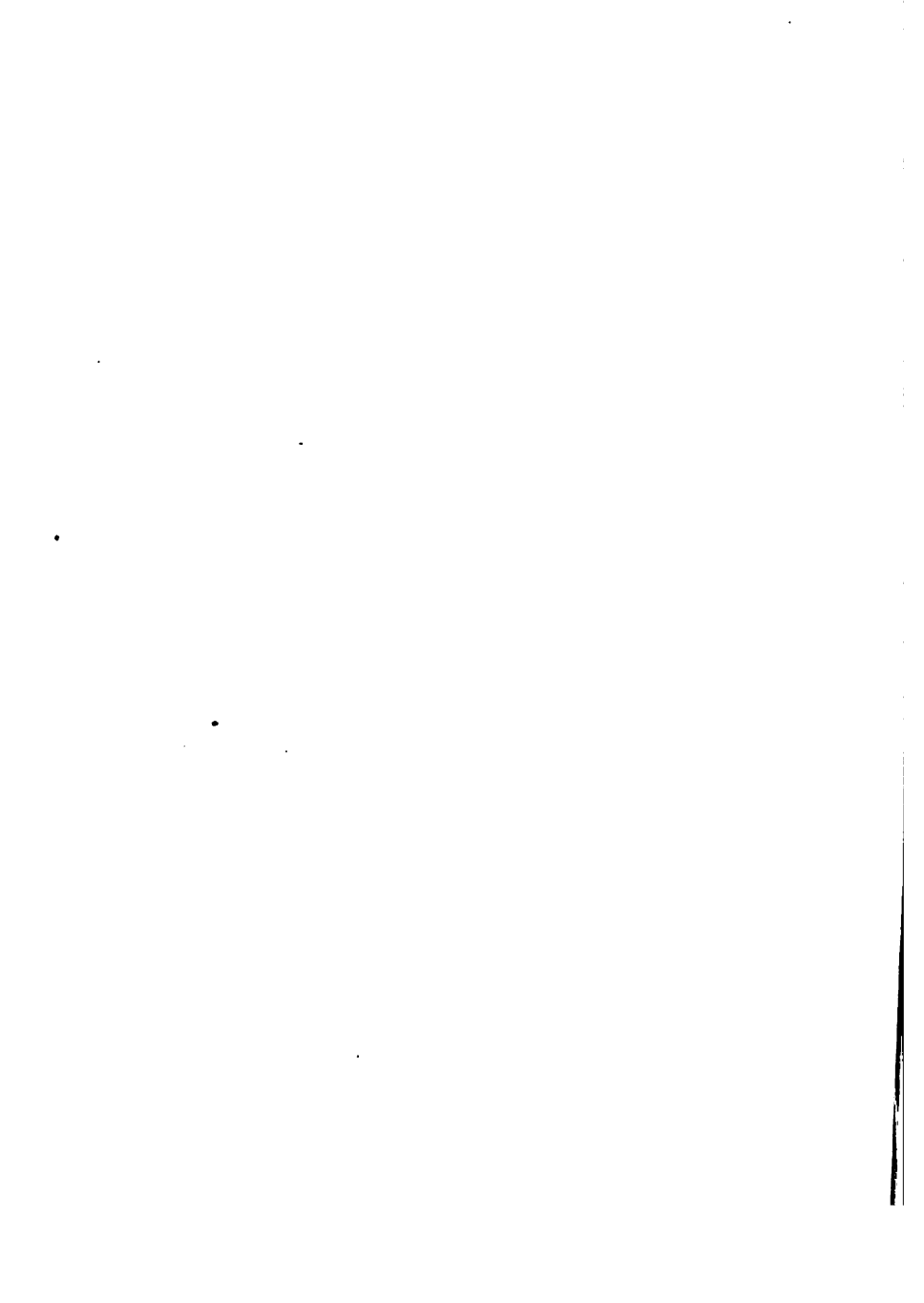
# BELGIUM

1980

DESMOND C. DUNN

7/5/98





7/5/98

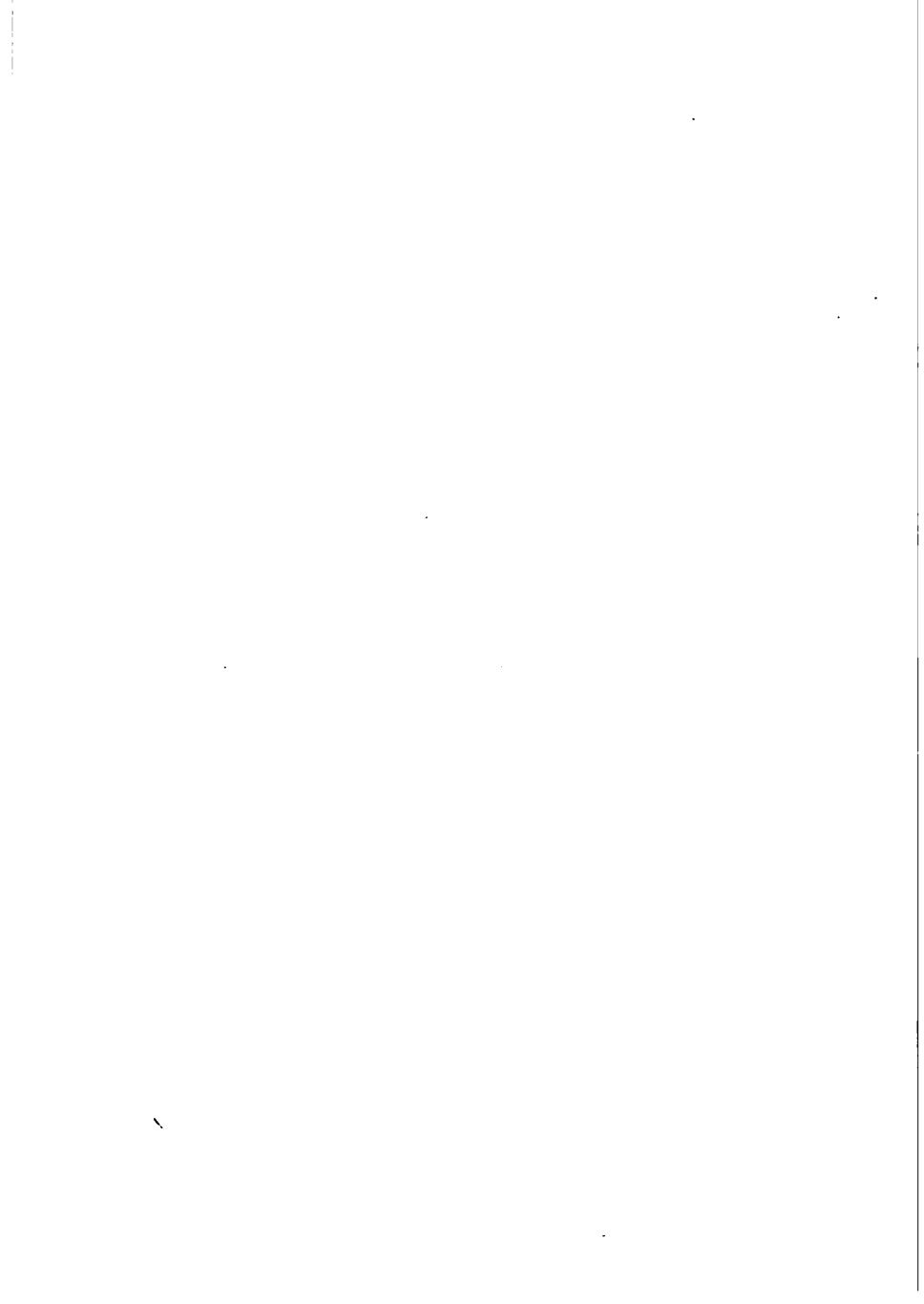












# BELGIUM

By

DEMETRIUS C. BOULGER

---

Published for the

BAY VIEW READING CLUB

CENTRAL OFFICE, BOSTON BOULEVARD

DETROIT, MICH.

1913

This One



m2H-9U8-PTD4



# Belgium

---

## CHAPTER I

### THE TWO RACES OF BELGIUM

THE most striking fact in the national life of modern Belgium is that two distinct races, in blood and in language, form there a single community and even a united people. In Austria-Hungary there are many races and many tongues, but in Belgium there are only two, and as they almost balance each other in strength and influence, the harmony that exists between them is more remarkable. These two races are the Walloons and the Flemings. The connecting bond between them is, no doubt, the close political association that has kept the Walloons and Flemings under the same administration, since the first union of the State in the fifteenth century by Philip the Good, of the House of Burgundy. The fact that the two races have shared a common political destiny under foreign and native rulers during more than four hundred fifty years has removed many natural causes of friction between them, and has created some definite belief in their joint and identical interest. It is a fact which

cannot be explained away, that Flemings and Walloons have never in the long course of their combined history, which commenced with the close of feudalism, engaged in a racial war, and this absence of strife has left an abiding impression on their relations. The strongest link, however, in the chain that connects the two peoples of the South Netherlands is provided by identity of religion; so that the most fruitful cause of all human differences and quarrels has never arisen to create a feud between Walloons and Flemings. There is consequently every reason to conclude that the two races, which in the past never came into hostile collision, are now well content to perform their duties together, and to be known as Belgians.

When the people talk of the Belgians as a modern people, with a history of only seventy-four years, they should not forget that the Flemings have scarcely changed in character, and not at all in their tongue, since the days of the Plantagenets; and that the Walloons, of Liège at least, are very much what they were in the time of the Prince-Bishops. Under these circumstances, it would have been natural to expect that one language would have prevailed over the other, or, at least, spread, while the other contracted. Such has not been the case. The Flemings still speak Flemish, the great majority of the Walloons French, while the Walloons of the Ardennes and parts of the province of Liège retain, for ordinary use, their old "Romance" tongue, Walloon. There has been no marked change.

in the proportions which the three languages bear to each other, except that all the Walloons now speak French. A small section in the Liège province, on the Prussian frontier, have, however, adopted German instead, but numerically they are insignificant.

There has never been any combined or common movement, as might have been expected during the long process of forming a new nation, towards the adoption of a single language in either French or Flemish, and this fact is very remarkable in the case of French, which had chances of spreading, through its hold on society and literature, that to onlookers would have seemed almost irresistible. The powers of resistance possessed by the Flemish race have been well displayed in the preservation of their language, and this triumph is rendered more remarkable by the fact that the Flemings, despite their language being of German origin, have never had any German sympathies, and have never received any outside assistance whatever in the successful maintenance of the right to preserve their own speech. As Flemish national energy is just as intense today as it was in the time of the Arteveldes, any project for the suppression of the Flemish language by French must now be pronounced chimerical. The French propaganda had every chance in its favor, and a fair field between 1831 and 1885, and it signally failed to gain the mastery. The conditions are never likely to be again so favorable for it, and in the meantime a decisive Flemish triumph has

been achieved. The only practical solution of the difficulty is that all Belgians should be bilinguals. At present this accomplishment is possessed by little more than ten per cent of the population, and the bulk of these persons reside in Brussels and the province of Brabant, which is intermediate between Flanders and the Walloon countries.

The difference in the language of the two races inhabiting what is now Belgium first attracted attention in the divisions of territory that took place soon after the death of Charlemagne, more than a thousand years ago. The fact of the Flemings speaking a German or Tudesque language seems to show clearly enough that they are descendants of the German colonists established on Belgian soil by several Roman Emperors. Clovis also introduced German settlers in the Meuse Valley, and finally Charlemagne removed a large number of Saxon families from their homes in Germany to the plains of Flanders. The western districts of Belgium were those in which these immigrants, voluntarily or forced, congregated. Flemish influence never reached the right bank of the Meuse, and a solid wedge of Walloon territory separated the Flemings from the Germans. When the Germans became interested in the Netherlands, at the end of the fifteenth century, through the marriage of the Archduke Maximilian with the heiress of Burgundy, the Flemings had lost all sympathy with their kinsmen in blood, and so it has remained ever since.

While the Flemish people form the German element in the Belgian nation, ethnologically considered, the Walloons represent the Celtic. They have probably a superior claim over that of the Flemings to be regarded as the descendants of the Belgic tribes of the country, or such of them as survived the sweeping measures of Cæsar, and they are closely akin to the people of ancient Gaul and modern France. They were probably leavened also by marriage between their women and the members of the Roman garrison, established for several centuries on their soil, just as they were in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by association with the Spaniards. The Roman and Spanish types are frequently met with in the provinces of Namur, Luxemburg, and Liège; and many Roman names, such as Gambrinus, Fabronius, Mamius and Marius are to be found today among Walloon surnames.

∴ The Walloons have the more right then, to pose as the original inhabitants of the country, and their language may be regarded as the "Romance" tongue which marked the transition between Latin and French. As Walloon is a living language today, the vehicle for the thoughts of the people in large districts, such as Liège and the Ardennes, this race has shown scarcely less tenacity in preserving the idiom of a thousand years ago than the Flemings. But there is one marked difference between them. There is scarcely a Walloon who does not now speak French,



whereas the vast majority of the Flemings are only acquainted with their own tongue, and find themselves in a foreign State when they visit the French-speaking parts of the common country.

As the two races had preserved their own separate languages during the long centuries that the country was subject to a foreign Power—Germany, Spain, Austria, France, or Holland—it was not surprising to find that the achievement of independence in 1830 was followed, at a brief interval, by the appearance of a language difficulty in modern Belgium. The Belgian rising against the Dutch in that year was primarily a Walloon movement. The Flemings, whose community of language with the Dutch provided them with a certain fellow-feeling, and at least prevented their resenting the proclamation of Dutch as the official national language of the Netherlands, were more disposed than the Walloons to accept the Orange dynasty. They might have dissociated themselves from the insurrectionary movement altogether but for the Dutch measures against the Roman Catholic Church which roused their religious fervor, and even as it was, they left the direction of the movement in the hands of the Walloons of Brussels and Liége. On the success of the movement for national liberation, it was only natural, then, that the Walloons should proclaim French as the official language of the country. At that moment, quite half the population did not understand a word of it; but seeing that the fatal act of the Dutch, which

entailed their expulsion, had been the proclamation of their language as the national tongue to be employed in the Courts, the triumph of French became a necessary part of the national triumph, and any agitation at such a moment on behalf of the Flemish language would have seemed unpatriotic and sympathetic to the Dutch. None the less, a thoughtful man knowing the situation would have declared that such a state of things could not endure permanently. A solution would have of a necessity to be found, or the State would split into two fragments at the first crisis or appearance of danger. The only possible solutions were three in number, viz.: that the Walloons should give up French and adopt Flemish, which was so inconceivable as to be palpably absurd; or that the Flemings should drop their language and learn French, which if not so fantastic, was still highly improbable; or that both races should master the two languages and become bilinguals. For this last solution, the most equal and the most flattering arrangements to both races, time and the spread of education were essential elements of success.

The establishment of the modern kingdom of Belgium in 1831 was followed then by that of French in the Chambers, the Courts of Law, and the Colleges as the national language of the new State. It had been employed by society more or less generally since the Crusades. Not a word was raised for or by the Flemings, the vast majority of whom, as has been said,

could not at that moment speak a word of French. But before the young kingdom had reached its twentieth year several things had become clearer, and one of these was that the Flemings were quite resolved not to give up their language. The necessary corollary of this tenacity was that they should claim and agitate for the admission of their language to an equal place with French in the country, of which they formed not the lesser part. A French observer, writing in 1855 from Brussels, declared, "The Fleming is slow, but he moves, and when once he makes up his mind to travel he goes far without stopping." The observation was called forth by the appointment of a commission to inquire into the complaints of the Flemish population set forth in numberless petitions. The report of this commission was strongly in favor of Flemish pretensions. It recommended that Flemish should be placed on an equality with French, and that all examinations and pleadings in the Courts should be held or expressed in either language or in both. The Government was so surprised at the sweeping character of these proposals that it suppressed the report, and kept it secret. Its purport only leaked out gradually with the lapse of years.

The Flemish movement began at Ghent in a modest way about the year 1836. Half a dozen literary and scientific men founded there a Flemish review called *Belgisch Museum*, and meeting with considerable success, they soon afterwards formed a club, tak-

ing as their motto, *de taal is gansch het volk*—"the language is the whole people." In 1844, Jan Frans Willems, the leader of the movement, summoned a congress, not, it is true, for a political purpose, but merely to exhort the Government to preserve the literary treasures of Flanders by the publication of its ancient texts. Assent was given to this request, but the necessary funds were not voted for ten years, which proved that the Government regarded the Flemish movement with distrust and even dislike. Willems died soon after the first congress, but the congresses went on, and were sometimes held in Holland as well as in Belgium. The work of Willems was continued in a more efficacious manner by Henri Conscience, whose romances stimulated Flemish pride and aspirations, and recalled the great days of Flanders. His *Leeuw van Vlaanderen* became not merely the most popular book of the day, but it idealized for all time the thoughts and longings of the Flemish race. It has, without much exaggeration, been called the Flemish Bible.

The efforts of Conscience were well seconded by those of the poet Ledeganck, whose ballads were sung or recited from one end of Flanders to the other. There were many other writers in the same field, and the Flemish agitation was illustrated by the one genuine literary movement that has occurred in modern Belgium. There were thus two marked and opposing tendencies in the country. The liberation of Belgium

had been followed by the undoubted and obvious increase of French influence in official circles. All the sympathies of the Court and the Government were French, but there was no corresponding movement in the literature of the country. The Walloon intellect proved sterile. On the other hand was to be seen a remarkable ebullition, not merely of talent, but of original genius, in the Flemish race, which had so long remained torpid and silent. This literary activity furnished proof of the vitality of the race, and of the strength of its hopes, which precluded the possibility of contentment with a subordinate position. The Flemings were resolved not to be a party to their own effacement. It was not, however, until 1861 that the Flemish party succeeded in carrying in the Chamber an address to the King, expressing the hope that justice would be done to "the well-founded demands of the Flemings."

It was soon after this event that a favorable opportunity offered itself for a demonstration calculated to stimulate public opinion. A native of Flanders, brought before one of the courts at Brussels, refused to plead in French, and his attitude was supported and imitated by his counsel. In another case a Fleming accused of murder was tried and sentenced without his understanding a word of what passed in court. The most was made of these cases to strengthen the claims of the Netherlanders, as the Flemish party called themselves. There was an obvious need for re-

form, and the public realized that this concession of the Flemish demands could only be at the peril of disintegration. At last a first tangible success was obtained when a law was passed in 1873 to the effect that in criminal cases the court should employ the language of the accused person. After that the Flemish movement progressed rapidly. A Flemish Academy was founded by the State in 1866; Flemish theaters for the exclusive representation of Flemish plays, or, at least, translations, were set up at the cost of the nation in Brussels, Antwerp, and Ghent. Finally, the Flemish text of laws and regulations was declared to be equally valid with the French; the names of streets, and all public notices in them, were to be printed in two languages in the five provinces in which Flemish is spoken; and a fluent acquaintance with both languages has more recently been made an express condition of employment in Government service in the same provinces for minor posts, and generally those of a superior grade. With these successes the triumph of the Flemish cause may be said to have been made complete. Ostracized after 1830, the Flemish language has gained in the last forty years a position of equality with French as the official language of Belgium.

The following statistics will be useful for purposes of reference in connection with the language question. By the census of 1890 the population of Belgium was 6,069,321. Of this number 2,744,271 spoke only Flemish, 700,997 spoke French and Flemish, 58,590 French

and German, 7,028 Flemish and German, and 36,185 French, Flemish, and German. The census of 1900 (we have not yet access to the census of 1910) showed that the population had risen to 6,815,054. Of this total 3,145,000 spoke only Flemish, 2,830,000 only French, and 770,000 the two languages.

The struggle of the languages has, therefore, resulted in what may be called a drawn battle. Flemish has gained the position to which the antiquity and solidity of its pretensions entitle it, but French remains the language of society, of the administration, and of the bulk of the literature of the country, while the common language of the people in the eastern and southeastern divisions is Walloon. There still remains to be found a solution for the political difficulties that must arise in a community so constituted, and it seems as if it can only be found in the direction of bilingualism. This result must be promoted by the stipulation that proficiency in the two tongues is requisite for public employment; but there are still nearly six millions of people in Belgium who know only one language. The Flemings have preserved their language by a rigid exclusiveness, and they have always refused to learn any other. The encouragement of bilingualism by the authorities is now represented to be an insidious attempt to vulgarize French in Flanders. On the other hand, the Walloons are protesting against the waste of time and uselessness of learning a language which is never heard in Wallonia. Time may remove these

suspicious and complaints, and force home the conviction to the mind of every Belgian that under the peculiar conditions in which his country is constituted, it is the duty of each citizen to master the language of the brother race, which shares the same national fortunes.

✧ The great bond, however, between the two races is religious union. Bavaria, Ireland, and Belgium have been called the three most devoted children of the Church of Rome, and in Belgium today the Flemings are the staunchest of Roman Catholics, and the real supporters of the political influence of their church. Readers of Motley may remember his describing "the majority of the burghers" of Ghent as belonging to "the Reformed religion." It would be difficult to discover today not only in Ghent, but throughout the whole of Flanders, a single Flemish family which is not attached to the Roman Catholic faith. This religious unanimity makes for the stability of Belgium, because it effectually separates the Flemings from the Dutch, who are practically the same people in race and language. The Walloons never betrayed any sympathies with the Reformation, and their devotion to the Roman Catholic Church in the sixteenth century was the main cause of the preservation of Spanish rule in the Netherlands, and of the consequent split of the provinces into North and South. But at the present time the Flemings rather than the Walloons are the chief prop of Roman Catholic power in Belgium. The



reason for this may be found by comparing the characters of the two races. The Fleming is simple in his habits, and somewhat restricted in his views, but with strong feelings, and a capacity for intense devotion to his convictions. He is averse to change of any kind, and having reconciled himself to the Church of Rome, after a brief lapse three and a half centuries ago, for which a severe penance was paid, he shows no tendency to embark on further theological adventures. The Walloon, on the other hand, is given by character to skepticism and free thought. He is far from being a docile servant of the Church, and politically he is quite beyond its control; not that he has any tendency towards any other creed. The Church of Rome has not to fear Protestantism in any form among the Walloons, who only include one church within their religious or politico-religious horizon. With them it is a question of the Roman Catholic Church or no church at all. The Walloons are the chief supporters and producers of the advanced Liberals and the Socialists. With the former the religious sentiment is far from being dead, but with the latter the deposition of the Church is an article of their program. The Liberals, however, have long been a decaying force. For fifty years they possessed political supremacy in Belgium, and the effort has apparently exhausted them. The old leaders are gone, and new ones have not yet been found. The capacity of reproduction seems to have disappeared. The Liberals of today

have no inspiration and no program. On the other hand, the Socialists are an active and aggressive body with definite ends, and moving towards a clearly visible goal. In the Walloon provinces they are rapidly winning over, if they have not already won over, the whole of the proletariat. Fortunately for the stability of the country, the Flemish population is just as stolid in its support of the Roman Catholic party, which from the political point of view is the only barrier to the spread and triumph of Republicanism throughout the land. The last election, however, favors a belief that the formation of a new moderate central party is not outside the bounds of possibility, and several eloquent speakers have been discovered who, in the course of time, may become popular leaders.

11 There is another direction in which the Flemings have done good work. They may claim that much of the present prosperity of the country has been due in a special degree to their efforts. They are hard workers, and the development of the agricultural wealth of East and West Flanders since Belgium became a kingdom has been unexampled. Industrially they have revived the reputation of Ghent, and commercially they have made Antwerp the first or second port of the Continent. The extraordinary material progress of Belgium furnishes clear proof that the presence of distinct races side by side, and running together, as it were, in harness, is not incompatible with the attainment of a high degree of prosperity.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EVOLUTION OF BELGIUM

THERE is no country in Europe where the old and the new are brought into closer juxtaposition than in Belgium. Perhaps it is due to its compactness, to its manifest limitations in size, that the student seems to find there set out under his eyes for close examination a microcosm of European history—on one side the well-preserved relics, not merely in art, but in social customs, of the Middle Ages, and on the other the fierce activities of this twentieth century. Its civilization might be called a product of Mediævalism moulded by modern influences. It is scarcely more than a generation of time since Belgium came into her own; yet behind the Revolution of 1830 lay ten centuries of recorded history. There are dark periods in that record when it looked on the surface as if the nationality that owed its name to Cæsar had expired; but a little research suffices to show that below the surface, whatever the ruler's name on the current coin, there survived the pride of race which is the surest foundation of independence, and that in the darkest hours of subjugation the cities and the provinces of Belgium knew how to retain, or if lost for brief periods to recover, their civic and constitutional

privileges. To those who admire the display of courage and fortitude under difficulties, the tenacity of the Belgians throughout their chequered history should survive as a model of an arduous fight for all that men hold most dear may be won in the teeth of adversity and against seemingly hopeless odds.

Belgium is divided into nine provinces. Each of their names recalls, and indeed represents, the oldest and most famous titles on the roll of European chivalry. They are (1 and 2) Flanders (now divided into East and West to separate the spheres of Ghent and Bruges, rival though, as the poet Ledeganck well called them, "Sister Cities") which is but the countdom created by Charlemagne, oldest of hereditary titles, the holder of which stood first among the Twelve Peers of the ancient kingdom of France;

(3) Hainaut, another countdom little junior to its neighbor, and known to every English schoolboy as the home of the good Queen Philippa, savior of the citizens of Calais;

(4) Brabant, a Duchy from the ninth century, whose dukes were long regarded as the mirror of Western chivalry;

(5) Limburg, another Duchy, connected with the House of Geuldres, of which the famous Egmont was a scion;

(6) Luxemburg, the countdom of the illustrious blind King of Bohemia, killed at Crécy;

(7) Antwerp, a Marquisate held by the sage God-

frey of Bouillon, Lord and Protector of Jerusalem;

(8) Namur, a countdom once possessed by the Courtenay family, Emperors of the East; and

(9) Liége, the seat of a long line of prince bishops, who held their own for a thousand years among emperors and kings.

These provinces remain as separate entities, each preserving the crest and coat of arms borne by their feudal owners, but are all now merged in the modern constitutional Kingdom of Belgium. Before passing on it may interest the inquiring reader to state that the seven hereditary titles just recapitulated belong by descent to the Emperor of Austria, as Head of the Houses of Hapsburg and Burgundy; but it is the present practice in Belgium to call the heir apparent Duke of Brabant, his brother, the Count of Flanders, and if the Duke of Brabant should chance to have a son in the King's lifetime, he is called the Count of Hainaut. Better proof could scarcely be furnished as to Belgium love for antiquity.

Side by side with the feudal dignities of which we have been speaking there sprang up in Belgium another institution that is scarcely less ancient than they are. The civic dignities won by the people themselves are almost as old as those conferred by Emperor and King. In the year 960 cloth markets were recognized by law at Ghent, Courtrai, and Ypres; and in 1068 the city of Grammont received the first charter granted by any of the Counts to the people of the towns. This

charter established a new law for the citizens, making them secure against the tyranny of Feudal and Clerical Courts. It will be interesting to trace the development of civic liberty in the history of the great cities. For the purpose of this general survey it is only necessary to note that the ancient glories of Belgium are as much civic and communal as noble, feudal, and chivalric. It was from Flanders that England borrowed her own civic institutions. The order of the Mayor, Sheriffs, and Jury, the great City Companies, the social splendors of the Guildhall, the excellent system of apprenticeship, were all based on the Flemish model, and originated in English emulation of Belgian prosperity and enterprise. The connection and resemblance are all closer because there as in Belgium civic magnificence and independence were regarded as entirely independent of and separate from the State and political power.

In the fourteenth century James van Artevelde sought to convert the Communes into a solid political confederacy. The attempt was renewed by his son Philip, but they both failed of success. The citizens did not want political influence or to be troubled about high affairs of State. They desired local liberty and freedom to attend to their own business. For external questions they were content that the Counts of Flanders should have their own way, and they were willing to provide them even generously with subsidies for the purpose. But this was always on the assumption

that the civic privileges remained intact, and when Ghent incurred, at the hands of the Emperor Charles V, the humiliation which its insolence fully deserved, the rights and statutes of the other cities remained undisturbed.

The influence of these civic traditions has not disappeared from Belgian life today. The Belgian describes himself by the name of his city rather than by his country, and if he happens to be of Brussels, he will even be so precise as to cite the name of his commune. For instance, it is quite usual to hear a person reply, instead of "I am a native of Brussels," "I am of Sc arbeek," or "I am of Ixelles." The explanation of this local pride is to be found in the fact that whereas the Belgian sometimes lost his country, he never lost his commune, and that he also found consolation in local liberty for the loss of national independence.

There is no doubt that Belgian life and character were greatly modified by the events of the sixteenth century. It does not seem an exaggeration to say that from the time of the Arteveldes to the abdication of Charles V the Belgian provinces formed the richest state in Europe. When that Emperor was chatting and joking with his rival, Francis I, he boasted not of his Indian argosies, but of his Flemish possessions. "I could put your Paris in my Gand," punning on the word "gant" or glove. Belgian prosperity was greatly diminished during the troubled reign of Philip II, but

the emigration of the weavers to England and Holland dealt a ruder and more lasting blow than the executions ordered by the Blood Council. The emigrants not merely impoverished the country they quitted, but they enriched that which they made their new home, by bringing to its industry the methods devised by their own skill and experience.

After the sixteenth century, then, Belgian prosperity declined, and the life of the nation passed under a cloud which was not dispelled until the country acquired its independence three centuries later. It declined not merely in itself, but by comparison with the increased prosperity of its neighbors. In Bruges and Ghent, once the centers of world-wide activity, grass grew in the stone-flagged streets. Antwerp fared no better, for its trade was strangled by the Dutch who closed the Scheldt, and got the Powers to endorse the closure by a long succession of treaties. Trading ships could not get into or out of Antwerp because the door of the port was shut and barred. Nor had Belgium to struggle only against Dutch jealousy. When the Emperor Charles VI took up the development of his Belgian provinces, and endeavored to make Ostend the base of a trade with India, he roused the apprehensions of England, whose price for assenting to the Pragmatic Sanction in favor of the succession of his daughter, Maria Theresa, was the cancelling of the Charter of the Ostend Company. In interesting himself in colonial matters like that of the Congo the late



King Leopold II took up the thread that was dropped in 1731.

The self-repression, and even suspended national vitality, to which the Belgians found themselves consigned after the Treaty of Munster, served to intensify the feeling that they had to live a life apart from their rulers, and that in the careful preservation of inherited custom they had the sole means of showing that they were still a nation. To the neglect of their foreign rulers were long added the horrors of the wars waged by rival nations on their soil. In the seventy years that closed with the Treaty of Utrecht, scarcely a city escaped pillage once if not twice, many thousands of soldiers had to be fed, the most sanguinary battles of the period were fought in Belgium. War was a curse, all the greater because peace brought no blessing.

Despite the rude trials of this long period of adversity the Belgians clung to their own way of living, and carried on the national traditions notwithstanding the presence of foreign hosts and indifferent rulers. When Villeroi, in 1895, laid half Brussels in ashes, and its civic life seemed ended with the destruction of the Hotel de Ville and Guild houses on the Grande Place, the citizens, regardless of international storms sweeping across the country, set themselves to the task of reconstructing what they loved with patience and persistency. Twenty years after the bombardment the Grande Place had resumed its normal appearance; the Austrian rulers, on assuming the government of

the country, found the civic life of the capital full of vigor. It took the Austrians imbued with the spirit of absolutism a generation to discover that the subject people, of whose very existence the Imperial Chancery affected to be ignorant, had a constitution of their own. The Count de Nény, Austrian by service but Irish in blood, reported to his sovereign, "These people have a constitution," and the English traveler, Shaw, declared the Belgians to be "the freest people on the continent of Europe."

It is necessary to remember these things if we are to understand how it was that the Belgians so easily, and as it were naturally, made for themselves a new constitution and system of government in 1830. They had merely to borrow from the old charters the ordinances that had prescribed the freedom of the people from the times of the Baldwins of Flanders and Wenceslas of Brabant. The Belgian Revolution did not introduce a new system, it merely revived and nationalized what had already been cherished as its ideal by the Belgian people under every form of foreign tyranny. There was greater difficulty in providing for the future than in extracting wisdom from the past.

For after Belgium had achieved her independence she was confronted with the necessity of adapting herself to the conditions of her new life. The old system to which under foreign tyranny she had clung, had totally disappeared from Western Europe; there remained the problem how would she adapt herself

to the new exigencies of an age of mechanical development and social upheaval? It must be recorded that under the influence of her recent emancipation Belgium succumbed to modern influences. Veneration for the past was superseded by the need of providing for the future. An entirely new Belgium came into evidence. The intense conservatism of the people was modified by the struggle of life, now that it had become a matter of national existence. One common trait connected the men of the two epochs—the capacity for work. At all periods of his history the Belgian has been a hard worker—"Give me a Walloon for honest work," said a German manufacturer of Gladbach recently to the present writer. Before 1830 the Belgian worked under adverse circumstances, after that year he worked with hope. In the wake of work has come unexampled prosperity, and that explains why the Belgian character and mode of life have been modified of recent years.

When its industry was strangled in the sixteenth century, Belgium became essentially an agricultural country, and this remained the state of things until long after Waterloo. To the Dutch King William I belongs, indeed, the credit of having initiated the industrial activity which is the characteristic feature of modern Belgium by associating himself with the Englishman, John Cockerill, in founding the great enterprise at Seraing. But it was not until after the substitution of national for Dutch rule that the coal mines

of Hainaut and Liège were exploited to any extent. The introduction of railways in 1835 rendered a supply of home-produced coal necessary, and about the same time that the Hainaut coal-fields were brought into full activity the extensive iron-field between the Sambre and Meuse was discovered and turned to profit. The foundries of Charleroi and Seraing were thus provided with all they needed for immediate activity and future development.

The achievement of national independence was thus followed by a great outburst of industrial and mechanical activity which enormously increased the wealth of the country. The provinces continued the intensive agricultural production which had for centuries kept the people from starving when their land was overrun by foreign soldiers. But the towns, and especially those in the valleys of the Meuse and the Sambre, emerged from a provincial stage and became the head centers of the new national activity. The aspect of the country completely changed. Its rural character was modified and encroached upon by the excavation of mines and quarries, and the erection of factories. Those who knew Belgium at the time of the French Revolution, when much of it was virgin forest, would not have known it fifty years later when the State had executed the plan of main railways devised in 1835.

The change was not confined to the external aspect of the country. Increased prosperity altered the char-

acter of the people. The necessity of thinking out and carrying out a national policy introduced new views and stimulated larger ideas. Misfortune had made the Belgian secretive and reserved. The centuries of foreign subjection had taught him the wisdom of caution, and those who are always cautious must in the end become more timid. As a nation, the Belgians of the old days sought to efface themselves; and they succeeded in their object so well that no foreign observer, after the close of the Burgundian period, can be found who attempted to diagnose their character or to treat them seriously as a people differing in essential points from all their neighbors. A few writers during the Austrian occupation refer to "the good Belgians" as "humble, meek, and subservient." That was before the Brabant revolution which temporarily ended Austria's domination, but it would have been far nearer the truth to have selected as their chief national characteristic long-suffering pride. They might be imagined as apostrophising Fate in words like these: "Do your worst. You cannot make us suffer more than we have suffered; yet we survive!"

As great a change as has passed over the face of the country has modified and moulded anew the Belgian character. Prosperity, the remarkable national success, the feeling of independence have dispelled the timidity that used to color all the views of the Belgians. Those who described them as loath to accept responsibility and fearful of their capacity to retain

what they have won are thinking of men of the last generation and not of the present day. Quiet but none the less resolute self-confidence is the basis of public opinion among Walloons and Flemings alike. The qualities that enable nations to bear adversity are not always those most suited for prosperity. Self-restraint, the suppression of natural emotion when withholding influence disappears, may easily become arrogance, and desire to browbeat those identified with former oppression may prove irresistible. But in the case of Belgium two circumstances have counteracted this natural revolution from one extreme to the other. There is the limitation to Belgian sovereignty in the imposition of permanent neutrality by the Treaty Powers which seemed to carry with it the assumption that Europe had recognized Belgium to a certain extent "on probation." It is scarcely necessary to say that that phase of her national life passed away long ago. Belgium can more or less work out her own destiny.

The second restraining circumstances is of a material order. To meet the increased financial burden imposed by the task of preserving what has been won under such difficult and perilous conditions attention has had to be concentrated on the development of the country's resources. All the greater effort has been needed because its population has increased at a greater rate than in any other part of Europe. With so much at stake, with such constant and continuous

demands on the administrative and intellectual faculties of the nation, it is not surprising that the Belgian character has become one of an essentially practical order, and that it recognizes only the proved facts of the day.

## CHAPTER III

### THE STORY OF BRUSSELS

**N**OBILIBUS *Bruxella viris* is the attribute assigned to the city of Brussels in the well-known monkish quatrain that summarizes the pretensions of the chief Belgian cities. Seven noble houses alone were in the first four centuries of its civic existence, allowed to build residences of stone within the walls; the seven gates were entrusted to the guard of a scion of each family, and although the seven *lignages* have disappeared from the *livre d'or* of Belgian nobility there is not a family of distinction today in Brabant that omits to trace its descent from one or other of those seven Brussels *gentes*. The chronicler knew his subject when he declared that Brussels was proudest of its noblemen.

The early history of Brussels is obscure, and it is not till we come to the construction of the first wall in the year 1000 that we touch firm ground. Yet the place is mentioned in cartularies of the tenth century, and popular belief is far astray if the building which gave it its name (Brock—sele, *i. e.*, dwelling on the border of a marsh) was not there a hundred years earlier. The dwelling seems to have been the residence of the clergy attached to the Church of St. Géry,



erected on an islet in the river Senne. Here about the year 980 Charles, brother of King Lothaire of France, and greatgrandson of Charlemagne, who had been raised to the Duchy of Lower Lorraine by the Emperor of Germany, Otho II, built a castle, in close proximity to the Church of St. Géry. To this church he removed from Alost the body of Ste Gudule (niece of the first Pepin distinguished as "of Landen") and at a later date we shall see how her name became attached to the collegiate church of Brussels. Charles did not reign long, for on attempting to make good his claim to the French throne on his brother's death he was captured by Hugh Capet and died in prison at Orleans. One of his daughters named Gerberga had married Lambert, Count of Louvain, who, on his father-in-law's departure appropriated Brussels. This circumstance explains why Louvain and not Brussels was the first capital of Brabant, and why modern Brussels is not a separate bishopric.

Lambert is an important personage in Brussels history for he was the first to surround the town with a wall. This *enceinte* was about two and a half miles in length (4,000 meters), and its eastern side ran along the crest of the hill named Michael's Mount, which at the southern extremity was specifically called the Caudenberg, or *frigidus mons* (the cold mount). On this side then the wall followed part of the modern rue Royale and the Caudenberg stood on the Place Royale. Lambert was killed at the battle of Florennes, but dur-

ing the indescribable confusion that followed in the affairs of the two Lorraine duchies his sons Henry and Lambert II succeeded in retaining possession of both Louvain and Brussels. In the year 1081 Henry of Louvain was a signatory of the famous Peace Tribunal established at Liége. In his time also the Church, dedicated to St. Michael alone in the first place, was commenced on its present site half way up the slope of the mountain at Brussels, and the relics of Ste Gudule were removed there from the Church of St. Géry. It was after this incident that the name Ste Gudule gradually displaced that of St. Michael, but in all formal documents both names are preserved to the present day.

The construction of the wall and the commencement of the Collegiate Church, which has been for so many centuries the glory of Brussels, marked its inclusion among the cities created by the industrial development of the peoples of Flanders and Brabant. If the Count of Louvain gave the order for surrounding Brussels with a wall to be pierced by seven gates, it was the citizens themselves who built it for their own ends. Protection from the raids of robber knights, and even from the attack of their own Counts was what they sought, and thus in the first fortification of Brussels no provision of a residence for the Count was made. The seven aristocratic families secured the privilege to build their houses in stone—for the others

wood or wattle was to suffice—and each assumed the custody of the gate nearest to its abode.

5 There is not much information to be found on the subject of civic life in Brussels in the eleventh century, but it may reasonably be assumed that the provision of security encouraged the weaving industry which furnished the basis of public prosperity in Brabant as well as Flanders. An incident of the year 1101, which is still preserved in public memory by at least a partial observance, throws some light on the state of society in that day. In 1096 many Brussels knights and citizens left to follow the banner of Godfrey of Bouillon for the First Crusade. More than four years passed without news, and it was concluded that all had perished in the distant expedition. One afternoon—19th January, 1101—the watchman at one of the gates announced the approach of a small band to the sound of trumpets. It was soon discovered that they were the returned Crusaders, or at least such of them as survived, and their wives and womenfolk rushed through the gates to meet and welcome them. A great banquet was provided in honor of those who were thought to be lost but had returned in safety, and it was declared that the husbands remained so long over their feast and their wine that their wives seized them and carried them off on their shoulders to bed. This event is still known as the *Vrouwkins Avondt* or *la Veillée des Dames* (the ladies' watch), and in some

parts of Brussels on each 19th of January women may still be seen carrying men about on their backs.

In the year 1140 Godfrey the Bearded, Count of Louvain and Brussels, was raised to the rank of Duke of Lower Lorraine, but gradually the different Counts (*e. g.*, Luxemburg, Limburg, Namur) shook off their dependence on the Duke who became merely a feudatory of the Empire on the same level as the others. It was in these circumstances that the name Brabant superseded that of Lower Lorrain. The diminution in the extent and significance of the Duke's authority rendered the good-will of the citizens of Brussels more important to him. Thus it gave the citizens their chance of establishing their own position in an age when there was no intermediate grade between the noble and the serf. The Duke needed the subsidies of the towns; the communes granted them in return for rights and immunities. In 1235 Louvain and Brussels received their first charters of enfranchisement. They were exempted from the operation of the feudal law by the Duke's assent to laws of their own making. Brussels acquired the right of choosing seven sheriffs and thirteen jurors, subject, indeed, to the Duke's approbation, but this formality did not affect the main point which was that the citizens were to be tried not in the Duke's court, but in their own. Once the immunity of the citizen from the feudal law was secured there was not much difficulty in making each grant of

money an occasion for strengthening the terms or enlarging the conditions of the original charter.

7 - In the midst of these discussions came the reign of John I, Duke of Brabant, one of the most splendid figures of the feudal ages. He was a poet, songster, and knight-errant as well as a great general and a wise and considerate ruler. His court was the resort of the troubadours, and he and his sister Mary, afterwards Queen of France, took part in the competitions of the minstrels. As knight-errant he proved the victor in seventy tournaments, the most memorable of which was when he slew his sister's calumniator in the lists at Paris on the occasion of his demanding on her behalf the "judgment of God." His claims to generalship were established at the battle of Woeringen on the Rhine, the most famous victory in the annals of Brabant. His wars proved so costly that he had twice to ask the citizens of Brussels and Louvain to aid him with the twentieth of their real property. In return for this "free gift," as it was termed, the cities received further privileges including a definite penal code which they had authority to enforce on all persons except "monks, nuns, priests, Lombards, and Jews," who were to remain subject to the Duke alone. He also bound himself to nominate no amman or other ducal representative in the towns as the reward for money lent to himself, and finally he agreed that the evidence of his officers and servants was not to be regarded as of greater weight than that of their accusers. It was in

1292 that John the Victorious granted these privileges; two years later he was mortally wounded in a tourney in Champagne, and he was buried in the Church of the Franciscans at Brussels, his favorite city.

The privileges enumerated were won and retained not by the mass of the citizens, but by the privileged members of the aristocratic or plutocratic families who alone provided the sheriffs and jurors. From the disaffection that revealed itself during the reigns of John's two immediate successors it seems plain that they abused their power, and that those born outside the charmed circle found oligarchical tyranny worse than that of the feudal law. Duke John II supported the privileged classes at Brussels and Louvain, and in a battle in the Vilvorde meadows he overthrew the "white hoods," as the artisans called themselves. But in the end the citizens carried their way by closing their coffers, and in the year 1312 the Duke was compelled to sign the famous Charter of Cortenberg, which confirmed and extended the privileges his father had granted twenty years before. This charter was the real basis of all Belgian liberties. John II died soon afterwards, and like his father was buried in Brussels, where his tomb and that of his wife Margaret of York may be seen at the present day in Ste Gudule.

His son and successor John III was allied, somewhat reluctantly, by treaty with Edward III of England, who appointed him his "lieutenant-captain" for

the kingdom of France, but his days were saddened by the deaths of his sons and the ravages of the "black death." He died in 1355, leaving his possessions to his daughter Joan and her husband Wenceslas of Luxemburg, son of the blind king of Bohemia who fell at Crécy. At a remarkable assembly on the eve of his death the representatives of thirty-eight towns of Brabant swore before Duke John to uphold the integrity of the dominions he bequeathed to his daughter and her husband. A few days later, January, 1356, Wenceslas and his wife made their "joyous entry" into Louvain, and it was decreed that this form of inauguration carried with it the ratification by each successive duke of the Charter of Cortenberg.

During the reigns of the three Johns Brussels had been growing in importance. Several of the most important churches that have come down to the present day were then commenced. Ste Gudule, the Sablon, and La Chapelle may be named. John III built on the Caudenberg the castle residence which ultimately developed into the famous Palace of the Netherlands. His friend and comrade in arms, William de Duvenvoorde, was permitted to build a stone house near his prince's, and this became eventually the Palace of Nassau and the home of William the Silent. The famous Hotel de Ville already flanked the Grande Place, and the guilds and metiers fixed their quarters in the adjacent houses although at first they were built only in wood. At the same time that Brussels was assuming

a more imposing appearance by the erection of these important buildings, its inhabitants were greatly increased by the advent of many persons who wished to exchange the insecurity of the open country for the security of a walled town. Brussels was also the center of a prosperous weaving industry. At this period the population may be reasonably computed at 50,000 persons.

Remembering that people required a great deal more space for their houses in those days, and that some cultivation had to be allowed for within the walls, it is not surprising that the original *enceinte* of the year 1000 seemed too small, and that space within it had grown too cramped. Almost the first act of Wenceslas and Joan, so far as Brussels was concerned, was to decide on the construction of a new and enlarged wall, which was still to be pierced, however, by the seven historic gates. This *enceinte* embraced a much larger extent of the crest of Michael's Mount than its predecessor, and the three gates of Louvain, Namur, and Hal, occupied the very positions which their names at least apply to at the present time, although that of Hal alone remains as a structure. Indeed, the wall of Wenceslas existed more or less completely down to the time of Waterloo. The work begun by Wenceslas in 1357 was not completed till the close of the reign, as the year 1381 carved in the wall of the Hal tower shows.

There was a curious but strictly enforced rule



passed at this time with regard to entrance and exit to and from the city. The gates were open from 3:30 in the morning to nine at night in the summer, and from six to five in winter. During the times of closure the gates were opened for no one, high or low, and the belated citizen had to pass the night as well as he could on the other side of the mote. It is said in one of the chronicles that these unlucky persons, in addition to being kept out of their beds, had to put up with the jeers and jests of luckier citizens who witnessed their discomfiture from the walls.

It was just before the commencement of the second *enceinte* that one of the most striking episodes in Brussels history took place. On the death of John III of Brabant, Louis de Male, Count of Flanders, put forward his claim to the possession of Brussels in right of his wife, the Lady Margaret, Joan's younger sister. He promptly marched with a large army to seize the city, and Joan, in the absence of her husband Wenceslas, went out to meet him in the fields of Scheut, near Brussels. The battle, fought on Aug. 17, 1356, proved a victory for Flanders, but Joan escaped to join her husband on the Meuse. Then for the first and only time in history a Flemish garrison was installed in the gay proud city of Brabant.

The occupation lasted only two months, and Brussels was recovered by an act of heroism on the part of a scion of one of the seven *lignages*. Everard T'Serclaes was a knight attached to the cause of Wen-

ceslas, and he conceived the idea that it would be easy to recover the city by a *coup de main*. He collected a small band of resolute men from among those who had fled with Joan, and scaling the wall in the night of Oct. 24, 1356, made straight for the Hotel de Ville. Here they slew the guard, cut down the Flemish standard, and proceeded to rouse the citizens to the cry of "Brabant for the Great Duke!" The Flemish garrison was exterminated, and the authority of Wenceslas was restored. Everard T'Serclaes became the hero of Brussels and in a sense still remains so. Thirty-three years later he was surprised on the high road by an enemy who caused his tongue to be cut out and a foot to be cut off. He was conveyed into Brussels to die. The closing scene took place in a house known as the Etoile beside the Hotel de Ville. This house, built of wood, was demolished in the sixteenth century to allow of a fresh street being pierced into the square; and some years ago a recumbent statue of Everard T'Serclaes was placed within a niche to remind the modern age of his achievement.

The later years of the reign of Wenceslas witnessed serious troubles at Louvain, where the trades rose against the patricians. In the end the Duke had the opportunity of establishing his own power through the fatal rivalry of the two parties, but the prosperity of Louvain declined. It ceased to be regarded as the capital of Brabant, and its pre-eminence was transferred to Brussels. Wenceslas, although he extended

the charters and swore more than once to respect them in return for subsidies, did not love the cities. He built a strong moated castle at Vilvorde, which was as much a State prison as a house, and he lived generally at Luxemburg. He died at that place and was buried at the famous abbey or Orval. His widow reigned alone for twenty-three years after his death, dying herself in 1406.

The fifteenth century saw a great advance in the fortunes of Brussels. Somebody described it in the fourteenth century as "poor, sad, and somber." This was at a moment when the "black death" was ravaging the country. The establishment of the House of Burgundy on the throne of the Netherlands introduced a brighter future. It was not, indeed, until the accession of the third Burgundian ruler, Philip the Good, that any definite change could be noted in the ruler's treatment of Brussels. He was the ruler of Brabant as well as Flanders, having made his "joyous entry" into Brussels in October, 1430. That occurrence was the ratification by the new dynasty not merely of the charters already cited, but of new privileges gained in the interval after Duchess Joan's death. Of these the most important was the division of the forty metiers into nine Nations that still exist.

It was in or about the year 1450 that Philip the Good transferred his residence from Ghent to Brussels. He caused the castle of Caudenberg to be enlarged and embellished so that it might form a suit-

able royal residence. He enclosed a park and garden on adjacent ground, and as a proof that he wished Brussels to be regarded as the capital of his dynasty he removed to it from Bruges, which had witnessed its foundation, the archives and treasury of his famous order of the Golden Fleece. The famous Hotel de Ville was completed and the gilt figure of St. Michael overcoming the Devil (the masterpiece of Martin van Rode) was placed as a vane on its lofty tower where it remained until damaged and broken in 1863 during a great storm. The present figure is as near as may be a facsimile by the artist Heims. The city seal of Brussels bears the figure of St. Michael as that of its tutelary saint.

Charles the Bold undid as much as he could of the concessions made to the communes, but his military failures led to the cities once more becoming masters of the situation, and after his death his daughter Mary had to restore all that he had taken away. It was at this time that the Burgomasters of Brussels, who have numbered in their ranks some of the most remarkable men of the Netherlands, began to figure prominently before the public. In Flanders the communes were always impersonal, except for the brief passage across the public stage of the Van Artevelde, but in Brussels the personal element was obtrusive. The power and authority of the commune became concentrated in the person of the burgomaster, the elected head of the citizen, while the Duke's amman was a

mere cypher, and at last the sovereign did not think it worth his while to nominate one.

✓ - The first of these burgomasters to leave a name in history was the Chevalier de Locquenghien, who in 1477 introduced a scheme for improving the water supply of the city. At that time the bulk of the water required was obtained from the Senne, comparatively speaking an insignificant stream. We know nothing of the system of sanitation enforced in cities in those days, but an adequate supply of water was essential both in peace and war. The growth of the population called for an increased supply. Locquenghien obtained it by the construction of a canal from the Ruppel and the Scheldt to the Senne. This canal, known as the Willebroeck, provided Brussels with the necessary supply and also with a fresh means of communication with Antwerp and the outer world. It was by the Willebroeck Canal that the Prince of Orange made his triumphal entry into Brussels at the invitation of the States of Brabant on Sept. 23, 1577. The medal struck to commemorate the event bears the name of Locquenghien in grateful tribute from the people who benefited by his work.

Brussels owed much to Charles V. He added to the Palace, which had been little touched since the time of Philip the Good. It was he who built the fine Cour des Bailles, the courtyard surrounded by a stone wall crowned with iron railings elaborately worked and richly gilded. The court occupied the space now

allotted to the Place Royale. Some years later he had the satisfaction of seeing before the close of his reign the completion of the beautiful chapel. It was considered at that time that the Palace of the Netherlands was the finest royal residence in Europe

// Having mentioned Charles V, there is one incident of his last days in Brussels that may be referred to. After his abdication he resided for twelve months in a small house in the park attached to the Palace. The house seems to have been situated at the extremity of the park nearest the Porte de Louvain. The reason for the Emperor's deferring his departure for the monastery of St. Juste, in Estramadura, is not clear, but there is no doubt that he was greatly crippled with gout and rheumatism. While waiting here he received a visit from Admiral Coligny, who brought him a letter from the King of France. Charles took it in his hand, but owing to the cramp was unable to break the seals. Coligny had to cut them with his dagger. Then they fell to talking of wars and generalship, and Coligny did the part of listener. Charles declared that his brother and he were the two greatest generals because they had seen more wars than any one else. Then came Alva; Coligny himself was too young as yet to aspire to that eminence. It must have been an interesting conversation, but there were no reporters present, and we only get the fragments.

' We come now to the stormy period of Alva and the Spanish Inquisition. Brussels was the scene of all

the introductory incidents. It saw the presentation of the famous Petition to Margaret of Parma, the formation of the Beggars' League in the Culemburg Hotel, and then the flight of William of Orange on the approach of Alva, and the arrest of Egmont who would not flee. Horn was then enticed to Brussels and placed in the same prison as his friend, first at Ghent and finally in Brussels. This was only a few days before their execution together on the Grand' Place. The Maison du Roi, which was built about 1520, was selected as their final place of detention, because it looked on the Grand' Place, the appointed scene of execution. The Maison du Roi had been named in the first place the Broodhuis because the price of bread was declared there, but its name had been changed on the establishment in the building of some of the Royal Courts of Justice. On June 1, 1568, Alva caused eighteen Belgian nobles to be executed, the next day four more shared their fate. There was a lull of two days, but Egmont and Horn had been brought from Ghent. On the 5th they were executed on the same spot. The scene has been described by Motley, who, however, omits to say that the French Ambassador exclaimed on seeing Egmont's head fall in the dust: "My master's army has been reinforced by 10,000 men." Another and little known instance of the callousness of Alva was furnished in the year following these executions, when a great tourney and jousting festival was held on the Grand' Place. The

contemporary account does not reveal any popular interest in the affair. The citizens of Brussels had for the time at least been cured of their passion for amusement. It was on the Grand' Place, too, that five years later Requesens, the new Governor-General, proclaimed the Pope's pardon and the King of Spain's amnesty to the people of the Netherlands, or rather to such of them as remained true to their religion.

A very different scene was enacted on the Grand' Place a little later on. Brussels joined the Pacification of Ghent, and the ruling power was vested in the old States and not in a Spanish Governor. This was the time when William the Silent paid the visit to Brussels already referred to. He might have given life to the confederacy in Belgium, but unfortunately the nobles of Brabant were jealous of him and sent to Austria for the Archduke Mathias to come as Governor-General of the Netherlands. Mathias came and took the oath to the States in 1578 on the Grand' Place, and at the same time William was installed in the inferior office of Governor of Brabant. William the Silent had also rendered himself unpopular in Belgium by leaving the Catholic Church and proclaiming himself a Lutheran. The hollowness of these appointments was exposed a fortnight later when Don John of Austria routed the States' army at Gembloux.

The last and most curious incident of this period, that had the Grand' Place as its scene, was the attempt of Philippe d'Egmont, in June, 1579, to recover Brus-



sels for the Spaniards. Accompanied by a few hundred horsemen, detached from the army with which Parma was besieging Maestricht, young Egmont, wishing to signalize his loyalty by some striking deed, made a raid on Brussels. Forcing one of the gates, he and his band made straight for the Grand' Place. But the town levies rose to the occasion. They also hastened to the scene, and, blocking the seven streets then and still leading to the Square, the invaders found themselves caught in a trap. After listening to the reproaches poured upon him for forgetting his father's death, Philippe d'Egmont was allowed to retire, having lost but few of his men. It was not till 1585 that Parma, busily occupied at Ghent, attacked and captured Brussels. Curiously enough the records mention that a Scottish regiment took part in the defense without giving any particulars of its name or composition.

A brighter future dawned for Brussels in the year 1599 when the Archduke Albert of Austria and the Infanta Isabella of Spain made their "joyous entry" into the city. It was inaugurated with what was deemed a happy omen. From the time of the Crusades crossbowmanship had been one of the popular games of Belgium, and the new chief was expected to draw a bolt at a flying bird. Mary of Burgundy had sped a shaft with unerring aim. So had Philip the Fair and his son Charles V. Isabella was among the fortunate who brought down the quarry, from which a bright future was augured. Even to the pres-

ent day the guilds of the Crossbowmen of Hainaut and Brabant are important and prosperous. How important they were in the Middle Ages may be inferred from the fact that the Guild of the Crossbowmen founded in 1304 the Church of Notre-Dame des Victoires, which exists today under the name of the Sablon.

On the whole, Brussels flourished during the seventeenth century, at least until it approached its close. Among the greatest of its civic chiefs was Frederic le Marselaer, Baron de Perch, who was seven times Burgomaster in the first quarter of that century and whose lineaments will be known as long as the canvas of Vandyke endures. The same artist's portrait of the worthy Burgomaster's wife, Margaret de Baronaige, also exists, but his group of twenty-three members of the counsel presided over by Marselaer, which was one of the ornaments of the Hotel de Ville, was destroyed when Villeroi bombarded Brussels in 1695.

The Brussels of which we are speaking had not changed since the Middle Ages, and probably reached its prime about the year 1650, when Condé, sulking like Achilles in his tent during the Fronde, took shelter there from Richelieu. We have a contemporary description of the city from the pen of a French officer, Colonel Duplessis l'Ecuyer, who was in his suite, that will admit of being quoted:

"Brussels is one of the finest, largest, and best situated cities, not only of Brabant, but of the whole of Europe. The old quarters, which have an aspect

so singularly picturesque with their sloping and tortuous streets, the fine hotels of darkened stone sculptured in the Spanish fashion, and the magnificence of the Place of the Hotel de Ville, are buried behind an *enceinte* of walls pierced by eight lofty gates flanked with one hundred twenty seven round towers at almost equal distance from each other like the balls of a crown. At a distance of less than a mile commenced the forest of Soignes with great numbers of stags, red and roe deer, that were hunted on horseback even under the ramparts of the town. On the promenade of the Court there circulated in a long file ceaselessly during fashionable hours five or six hundred carriages, the servants in showy liveries. In the numerous churches the music was renowned. Under the windows of the Palace stretched the park, open all the year to respectable people and twice a year to the public, a park filled with trees of rare essences and the most delicious flowers so artistically disposed and so refreshing to the eyes that M. de la Serre declared on leaving that if he had seen there an apple tree he would assuredly have taken it for an earthly Paradise."

--This very pretty picture, drawn by a Frenchman, was sadly interfered with by one of his countrymen some forty years later. Marshall Villeroi appeared on the heights of Anderlecht with an army of 60,000 men in August, 1695, and forthwith proceeded to bombard the city with red-hot bullets. His object was to compel William III to abandon the siege of Namur, which was on the point of surrender. Villeroi carried on the bombardment for forty-eight hours (August 13-15) and during this time an enormous amount of damage was caused. Sixteen old and interesting

churches, all the ancient buildings on the Grand' Place, with the exception of the Hotel de Ville tower, and 4,000 houses were laid in ruins. Brussels did not begin to rise from its ashes until after the end of the War of the Spanish Succession. When its citizens did take heart to rebuild, the old Mint was replaced by the first Theater of "la Monnaie."

In 1731 Brussels again suffered heavily from fire, when the famous Palace of the Netherlands was destroyed through the carelessness of some cooks preparing sweetmeats. The fire continued for two days, the Archduchess Marie Christine barely escaped with her life, and many of Rubens' masterpieces perished in the flames. No attempt was made to restore this palace, and for the rest of the period of Austrian rule the residence of the Governor-General was fixed in the old Nassau Palace. Villeroi's bombardment does not stand alone. Marshal Saxe fired on the city in February, 1746, but more considerate than his predecessor, he aimed at the wall and not at the public buildings. After this occurrence Brussels remained in the possession of the French for three years and received two visits from Louis XV, who resided in the palace of the Duke d'Arenberg, of which Egmont had built the first portion in 1548.

Two further incidents may be referred to in concluding this chronicle. After the treaty of Utrecht the Netherlands passed to Austria, and Prince Eugene was appointed Governor-General. Unfortunately for

Belgium he was too much employed with his work as generalissimo to take up personal charge, and he appointed as his nominee the Marquis de Prié. De Prié set himself to the task of establishing a rigid autocracy, and he came into collision with the civic authorities who strove to uphold their charters and constitution. The champion of the city was Francis Anneessens, one of the syndics, and he set the example in refusing to take the oath until the old constitutional rights had been confirmed. De Prié arrested Anneessens and three of his brother syndics. They were put on their trial and in a summary manner Anneessens was sentenced to death and the others to banishment. The execution took place on the Grand' Place on Sept. 19, 1719, and through petty spite De Prié refused his victim Christian burial, but his remains were collected by his friends and admirers and given a burial in a secret but secure grave of the Church of La Chapelle.

The later Austrian governors were more considerate in their dealings with the Belgian people, and Prince Charles of Lorraine, who represented the Empress Maria Theresa for forty years at Brussels, was one of the most popular rulers the Belgians ever had. It was he who planted the avenues of lime trees which still adorn the upper boulevards of the city.

During the Brabant revolution of 1789 Brussels was captured, as the saying went, "by its own citizens." There was, however, very little fighting and less bloodshed. It is said that 60,000 shots were fired and no

one was killed, for "those who knew how to shoot did not want to kill, and those who wished to kill did not know how to shoot." The old capital on the slope and summit of Michael's Mount has held its own in the struggle for existence among great European cities during the eight centuries that have elapsed since a monkish chronicler called it "the delice and glory of Brabant."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE STORY OF ANTWERP

THE records of Antwerp are meager in comparison with those of the other cities, but as its burning by the Norman pirates in the year 836 is an historical fact, it must then have existed at the least for a century or more. In the Frank period a castle named Andhunerbo is marked on the site, and this brings us to the explanation of its name. The castle was built here to protect the approach by the Scheldt, and to prevent robbery either by foreign plunderers, or by foreign traders introducing goods without paying toll to the sovereign of the land. The general European punishment for theft in those days was to cut off the thief's right hand. It is still the practice in uncivilized Africa and in Afghanistan. On the Scheldt the infliction of the penalty had a sequel. The cut off hands were thrown into the river, hence the origin of the name—Andhunerbo in mediæval Latin or Antwerpen in Flemish, *i. e.*, the place of hand-throwing. On the arms of the city to this day appear the castle and two severed hands.

A suggestion has been made, and naturally Motley, who rather lays himself out for ponderous joking at everything mediæval and feudal, favors it, that the

name Antwerp is nothing more than "an t' werf" (in Flemish, "on the wharf"). It is rather curious that so skilful a compiler of facts should overlook the point that this really fantastic etymology does not explain the origin of the older name of Andhunerbo, which can only have one meaning. Besides, Antwerp was not a place of trade until a much later period. It was a castle guarding an approach to the country by a river, and proof of this is furnished by the fact that the Emperor Otho, on creating the fief, made it a Marquisate—that is to say, a frontier countdom. Among the holders of this title the most famous was Godfrey of Bouillon, but if a herald were to recite the full titles and dignities of the Head of the House of Hapsburg there would appear among them that of Marquis of Antwerp.

The commercial importance of Antwerp dated from the beginning of the decline of Bruges through the silting up of the Zwyn. It must be remembered that the approach of this calamity was visible half a century before it became complete, and the desertion of Bruges by traders was gradual. The patronage of the Burgundian Court also staved off the blow till the last possible moment. But none the less the commercial importance of Antwerp was well established in the earlier half of the fifteenth century. In the year 1450 the Antwerp records show that the Place de Meir was paved with stone for the first time. This was the



year also when the famous Cathedral, which was commenced a hundred years before, was brought practically to completion. In 1490 the foreign merchant Guilds or Nations transferred their headquarters from Bruges to Antwerp which at once became the principal center of trade for the whole of the Netherlands. Its position was far superior in every way to that of Bruges. Seated on a tidal river, navigable by the largest ships, it was most advantageously placed for communication by various waterways with the central and eastern provinces of Belgium.

↳ The period of Antwerp's greatest splendor was between the years 1550 and 1560, when it contained the houses of not fewer than a thousand foreign merchants. These houses were divided among six nations, viz., the Spaniards, the Danes and the Hansa together, the Italians, the English, the Portuguese, and the Germans. In 1560 more business was done in one month at Antwerp than in two years at Venice, although that city was still one of the chief places of trade in the world. Every day nearly 500 vessels entered and left the great port on the Scheldt, and two thousand wagons entered the city every week from France or Germany. Between 1550 and 1577 the total of the population fluctuated between one hundred fifty and two hundred fifty thousand persons. During this period of her greatest splendor Antwerp acquired her most famous buildings after her churches. The Hotel de

Ville, the Bourse (burnt down in 1858 and rebuilt), the Vieille Boucherie, the Musée Plantin all date from this epoch.

Bruges fell by the work of nature; Antwerp declined by the act of man. Antwerp has no reason to love the names of Spain and Alva. In 1567 Alva placed a Spanish garrison in Antwerp, and his first task was to build a citadel with the money of its citizens. Walls and fortified gates had always been the chief demand of the cities; the construction of a castle or citadel in the interior of the city had always been the first step in subjecting it to unrestrained autocratic power. Antwerp had escaped the troubles of the feudal period. Her day of trouble had arrived. The bastions of Alva's citadel were so solid that it took the French siege artillery three weeks to destroy part of them in 1832.

Beyond providing the means of its downfall, Antwerp did not suffer at the hands of Alva. The great blow was dealt by the mutinous Spanish garrison, which, having long arrears of pay to receive, decided to repay itself by sacking the city over which it was supposed to keep guard. The Spanish Fury, as it was called, raged through three days of the month of November, 1576. More than six thousand men, women, and children were butchered, eight hundred houses were destroyed by fire, and damage was done to the extent of ten millions of our present money. That was the direct loss; the indirect was greater, for a

considerable number of the citizens at once took refuge in England. The next blow that fell on Antwerp was the treacherous attempt of Anjou to seize the city in 1583, but the French Fury, as it was called, unlike the Spanish, ended in the triumph of the citizens.

It was Parma, the greatest of the Spanish leaders, who dealt Antwerp its *coup de grâce*. In 1584 he began its siege in a deliberate fashion by cutting off its communications. The city was held by a strong garrison under Marnix de Ste Aldegonde, but so close was the investment that by the summer of 1585 the besieged were on the verge of starvation and Marnix was obliged to capitulate. The victory was stained by no act of cruelty, but in the eighteen months covered by the siege, the population of Antwerp fell from 85,000 to 55,000 persons. This decline was, of course, largely due to the voluntary emigration of those who elected to follow the new religion.

Here again, as is so often the case in human affairs, the indirect consequences were more serious than the direct loss. Antwerp passed finally under the rule of Spain, and its legitimate successors. That signified its complete severance from the revolted northern provinces, which had acquired the command of the sea. To the great joy of its commercial rivals in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the blockade of the Scheldt was established, and the prosperity of Antwerp vanished like a dream. This blockade lasted during the better part of three centuries. From an act of war it passed

into an international condition embodied in a succession of treaties. One of the most prized possessions of the Dutch was the right to close and keep closed the navigation of the Scheldt. The effect of this exclusion from the sea on the prosperity of Antwerp is recorded in statistics that cannot be challenged or refuted. The city which contained after Parma's conquest a population of 55,000, had no more than 45,000 inhabitants in 1780, and of these one-third received charitable relief. The cause is as clearly revealed as the result. The port, which in 1555 had seen 2,500 ships at anchor in its roadstead, and 500 ships sail or arrive in a single day, received in the year 1761 only four vessels.

Antwerp enjoyed a glimpse of its early prosperity during the French occupation from 1794 to 1814. The closure of the Scheldt was declared to be "a survival of feudal tyranny and a violation of the rights of man." When France made a treaty with Holland as the Batavian Republic in 1795, she exacted the freedom of the Scheldt, and for the first and only time the Dutch waived their right. Despite the English command of the seas, as many as 3,000 ships came up to Antwerp in 1813. After the withdrawal of the French, Belgium was joined to Holland as the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and it was, of course, impossible for the Dutch to enforce old treaty right against their fellow-subjects. But after the Belgian revolution, this claim to close a neighbor's river was revived, and once more

the European Powers ratified a preposterous pretension. On this occasion, however, it was given a new form. The Dutch were no longer to have the right to close the river by firing upon and sinking any ship that entered it; but they were authorized to exact what was practically speaking a prohibitive toll—prohibitive in the sense that it only admitted of a moderate traffic, and forbade all expectation of its free expansion.

21 The situation thus created between Belgium and Holland was really intolerable, and no friend of the two States could find a word to say in favor of its continuance. But old privileges and treaty rights are not easily abandoned, and in this particular the Hague Government resembled every other. The toll of 73 cents per ton was rigorously levied, and the Belgian Government, which had voluntarily taken the burden on its own shoulders, found the charge irksome and irritating. Among other consequences it rendered it loth to stimulate the trade of Antwerp.

A way out of the difficulty was discovered through the patient and persistent efforts of the late Baron Lambermont, of the Belgian Foreign Department. The question of river navigation in Europe had been thoroughly discussed at the Congress of Vienna, where the clearest and soundest principles for its complete freedom from all hindrances had been laid down. The arrangements under the Twenty-four Articles for the Scheldt were really an infringement of those princi-

ples, and it is to the credit of Lord Palmerston that he strove hard to mould them in a more liberal spirit. His example was an encouragement to the Belgian statesman, who set himself to the task of emancipating his countrymen from an unjust and offensive limitation of their own freedom and independence.

30 The case of the Scheldt, although the most arbitrary, did not fortunately stand alone. There were others less involved with national prejudice which called for settlement, and the solution of which could not but hasten that of the major and more difficult problem. The case of the Sound and the Two Belts was the first to present itself. Denmark had there the same right of tolls as Holland possessed on the Scheldt. A conference met at Copenhagen in 1856 to put an end to the exaction. At Baron Lambermont's instigation, Belgium negotiated a special convention with Denmark, by which Denmark acquitted Belgium from paying any quota to the sum raised to free the Danish straits in return for Belgium's engagement, that in the event of the capitalization of the tolls on the Scheldt she would pay whatever there might fall on Denmark. Thus two principles were very adroitly introduced. First, that the tolls of the Scheldt were just as susceptible of being bought up as those of the Sound, and secondly, that each navigating State was liable for its quota.

A second case of a similar kind arose in 1860, when the State tolls levied by the Hanoverian Government

on the Elbe were capitalized at the suggestion of the British Government. Baron Lambertmont availed himself of this fresh opportunity by opening negotiations with the Hanoverian Government, and in 1861 a Belgic-Hanoverian convention was signed on the same lines as that with Denmark.

Armed with these two precedents, the Belgian Government then asked the Dutch Government the plain question whether it would admit or not the possibility of capitalizing the Scheldt tolls. For the first time since the privilege had been asserted to the detriment of the people of Belgium, the Dutch made a considerate reply by giving a cordial assent to the new principle. There remained only the practical point of deciding the quotas to be contributed by the respective navigating Powers. In this part of the matter, England, whose tonnage on the Scheldt was the largest, became the most important factor in the problem.

The quota could not be fixed by the simple rule of a comparison of the tonnage under each flag, for by such an arrangement Belgium, the chief beneficiary, would have got off for a trifling contribution. The Belgian diplomatist avoided this pitfall. He recommended his Government to take upon itself the responsibility of providing one-third of the total capital, or six times the amount that it would have had to pay by a mere comparison of tonnage. These points settled, the British Government was approached, for its co-operation as the largest contributor of all was es-

sential to success. Our policy had always been favorable to the removal of trade impediments, and no difficulty was experienced in London. There remained only to conclude a formal treaty with Holland prior to the summoning of a general conference for the ratification of these separate arrangements and their embodiment in a single act. Twenty-one Powers took part in the conference at Brussels in July, 1863, which finally freed the Scheldt. Belgium contributed altogether \$2,665,600, but if the toll had continued to be levied, it has been computed that she would have \$114,904,663.40. In modestly describing the significance of his own work, Baron Lambermont wrote: "In leanding its concurrence to the purchase of the Scheldt tolls the conference will undoubtedly render a service to trade generally. It will complete to the benefit of all nations the work commenced in the Sound and continued in the Elbe. Nor is this all. The foreign States will, by aiding Belgium in an enterprise which is known to be its legitimate desire and ambition, by giving this country and its venerated head a striking mark of sympathy, and by coming forward to sanction by their co-operation the henceforth perfect freedom of the Scheldt, bring a new consecration to the establishment of our nationality, and they will attach to it in some manner the imprint of universal solidarity."



The freeing of the Scheldt removed the fetters that had hindered the development of Antwerp since the days of its prime in the middle of the sixteenth century. Since that event, the city has burst its barriers, stretching out in every direction, and trebling its population. It has become not merely the chief outlet of Belgium, but one of the principal seaports of Europe.

## CHAPTER V

### THE STORY OF BRUGES AND GHENT

**T**HE story of the sister cities Bruges and Ghent may be told together, and as it forms the best-known part of Belgian history, a brief summary of the leading incidents will suffice.

The story of Bruges begins with the Foresters of Flanders, the officers entrusted by Charlemagne with the guard of that part of his kingdom who eventually became Counts of Flanders. Bruges itself, at the commencement, was known as Flanders (Vlaenderen). It was Baldwin Bras de Fer who gave it a separate name, and that no more high sounding than the place of a bridge. His son, the second Baldwin, fortified it, Ghent, Courtrai, and Ypres at the same time, thus founding together the four famous Flemish communes. Baldwin II married Elstrud, the daughter of Alfred, thus establishing the first link between England and Flanders. The first mention of Ghent is slightly earlier than that of Bruges. It was one of Charlemagne's naval arsenals—the other being Boulogne—and on one occasion the Norman pirates came up the Scheldt in their light draught snekkars and burnt his ships.

If the erection of walls was the first step in the

growth of cities, the more important incident in the life of those of Flanders was the establishment of cloth markets in or about the year 960. These markets were established round the principal church, and were distinguished by the name Kerkmesse (Kirk, church, and messe, market). The word soon became "kermesse," and is still in use as the popular name for a Fair. The creation of all Flemish towns was marked by three phases. The building of a church was the first phase. This occurred, as a rule, in the seventh and eighth centuries. The next was the construction of a wall and fortified gates, which may be assigned to the ninth century. The concluding phase was the opening of the cloth markets in the tenth century. The Flemish people thus turned at an earlier period than any other race in northern Europe from agriculture to industry.

A century after the opening of the cloth markets, the citizens who had laid the basis of a sound and expanding prosperity began to talk of and clamor for their rights. Their first triumph was the acquisition of the privilege of erecting a belfry to be used for the purpose of summoning the citizens to public meeting. Up to that moment the only bells had been those in the churches, and the acquisition of a separate belfry was as hard to win as it was highly prized. But the first distinct civic charter was granted neither to Bruges nor to Ghent, but to a town specially created for the purpose of being ruled by a new law by Bald-

win VI in the year 1068. This was Grammont, a place which otherwise never obtained fame, and which is to-day a town of the fifth order. None the less the Charter of Grammont is "the most ancient written monument of civil and criminal laws in Flanders." It established trial by jury, it exempted the citizens from church law except in matters of religion, and it introduced a system of fines in lieu of the almost uniform death sentence. Bruges and Ghent were naturally indisposed to leave Grammont a monopoly of such privileges.

Having won their charters from their Counts, the people of Bruges and their allied communes were in danger of losing them at the hands of the French King, who invaded and occupied a great part of Flanders in the first year of the fourteenth century. This foreign occupation did not last long. The French garrison was massacred during what was known as the Bruges Matins. A few months later this success was completed at the battle of Guinegate or "of the spurs" outside Courtrai on July 11, 1302, a memorable date in the history of Flanders. Although this great victory put an end to the fear of a French conquest, it was followed by a struggle between the Counts and the communes that went on for two centuries, and that only ended in the time of the Emperor Charles V.

The "heroic epoch" of Flanders reached its culminating point with the Artevelde. The elder, James, was not merely the leading tribune of Ghent, but he

was the one Belgian who, prior to the nineteenth century, might be called a great national statesman. His conception of Flanders was that of a great "neutral state" strong enough to repel all assailants, and therefore able to devote its attention to the accumulation of wealth and the enjoyment of industrial prosperity. To accomplish this required an efficient military organization and the expenditure of money. His views were too large for his age. He was accused of wasting the public treasure, and massacred by his brother citizens. Unwittingly the citizens by declining to follow a national policy, had struck the first blow at the continuance of their own commercial existence. The result proved the truth of the saying that "a house divided against itself cannot stand." The assassination of James van Artevelde occurred on July 17, 1345; the people of Ghent expiated their crime on November 27, 1382, when their forces, led by his son Philip, were routed on the field of Roosebeke by their Count and his French allies.

The highest point of Bruges' prosperity was reached soon after the establishment of the Burgundian rule, and the third marriage of Duke Philip the Good in the year 1430 may be fixed upon as its apogee. It was an incident of special interest for several reasons. The same summer witnessed the Duke's capture of Joan of Arc, and his handing her over to the tender mercies of the Bishop of Beauvais, and also the founding of the most famous order of the Golden Fleece,

named in double honor of the mythological quest, and of the source of local prosperity. Philip's third bride was Isabel of Portugal, greatgranddaughter of John of Gaunt, and she became the mother of Charles the Bold. The Duke of Bedford, brother of Henry V, had married Anne, sister of Philip, and owing to English defeats it had been arranged that Bedford should resign to his brother-in-law the Regency of France which the hero of Agincourt had placed in his charge. From many points of view the occasion was a memorable one, but the one fact that endured longest was the creation of the order of the Golden Fleece.

There seems good reason to believe that the Golden Fleece was founded by the Duke of Burgundy out of a spirit of emulation. He was a Knight of the Garter, established by Edward III three-quarters of a century earlier, and he resolved to have his own Order and to endow it with features peculiar to himself. The Garter was a chivalric order with a decoration and a badge; the Fleece was a distinct power in the land with its members immune from the general law. A Knight of the Golden Fleece could only be tried by the Chapter of his order. When Alva caused Egmont and Horn to be executed, the worst crime he committed in the eyes of many was in violating the rules of the Order to which he also belonged, and in ignoring the privileges of two brother Knights.

The Order was ostensibly founded in honor of the new bride, and so intent was the Duke on its mainte-

nance that he passed on its sovereignty to the husband of the last heiress of his family. This timely prescience saved the Order from extinction on more than one occasion. The first motto chosen for the Order was essentially applicable to the marriage: "*Aultre n'aray, Dame Isabeau tant que vivray.*" As it was his third venture in the matrimonial lists, he thought it proper to give the young princess some pledge, but this motto was not long in use. In a few years it was superseded by the motto of the Burgundian family, "*Je l'ay emprins*"—"I have undertaken." The Order, which was dedicated to the Virgin and St. Andrew, the patron saint of Burgundy, was limited to the sovereign and twenty-four knights. At first the archives and treasury of the Order were preserved at Bruges, where the knights had their stalls in the Church of Notre Dame; but the Archduke, afterwards Emperor Maximilian, removed them to Ste Gudule in Brussels. When the French Revolution broke out they were taken for safety to Vienna, where they still remain. In 1725 the Order was divided into two branches, the Golden Fleece of Austria and the Golden Fleece of Spain.

The marriage of Philip the Good was celebrated when Bruges was at its prime. A century earlier a Queen of France on visiting it had been so struck by the rich costumes of its ladies, that she exclaimed, "I thought I was the only Queen here, but I see a thousand around me." At that time Bruges was the lead-

ing financial city in Western Europe, or as it was put in those days, north of the Alps. The prices on its exchange ruled those elsewhere. It was said that more trading ships were to be seen in its harbor at Damme than in any other port save Venice. The Hansa, English, and Italian merchants had their resident agencies and counting houses. But a great national disaster was impending, with which neither the skill nor the resources of the men of the age could cope.

The prosperity of Bruges was based on its access to the sea, but even at the moment of the marriage fêtes it was known that the navigable channel from the sea to Damme was silting up, and that before many more years had passed it would be permanently closed. This stage was reached in the year 1490. The Zwyn became merged in that tract of unfathomed sand extending from Knocke to Terneuzen, which represents the Dutch possessions south of the Scheldt today. The merchants and the Guilds left the thus isolated city, transferring their headquarters to Antwerp, and Bruges entered upon its long sleep as a place of enterprise. Only in the twentieth century has it begun to show signs of returning vitality through the construction of the ship canal that connects it with the North Sea.

The prosperity of Ghent rested on a surer basis than that of Bruges, or perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say that it was less dependent on the co-operation of foreigners. The decline of Bruges in-



creased the importance of Ghent, which was for a century after the marriage of Philip the Good, the center of the political life of Flanders. It carried on a fierce struggle for its constitutional rights during that period, and it was only when the Emperor Charles V, banding together all the forces at his disposal, came down upon it with heavy hand in 1540, and imposed his memorable chastisement, that it succumbed.

Some idea of the stubborn and never-failing courage of the people of Ghent during the last century of its existence as a political entity may be formed from a brief summary of the events that preceded the final humiliation in 1540. The story commences in 1453 with the terrible battle of Gavre—"the red sea of Gavre"—when twenty thousand citizens were slain. Philip the Good seemed touched by the slaughter, for he exclaimed, "These were my subjects," but none the less he hung all his prisoners, including some English archers, who were hoisted to the loftiest trees. Among the penalties imposed were the imposition of a heavy fine, and the suppression of the trained bands of the guilds known as the White Hoods. Yet, in 1467, Charles the Bold, in the midst of a turbulent populace uttering threats on the very day of his inauguration as Count of Flanders, found himself obliged to restore all the privileges his father had confiscated fourteen years before. "Wait ten years," he exclaimed, "and we shall see who is master." Ten years later he fell in the battle of Nancy.

His successor, his only child and daughter, Mary of Burgundy, was left face to face with the citizens, who took full advantage of her troubles. Before they would allow her to be proclaimed they compelled her to sign a new charter embodying all the old privileges. Then only would they permit her to ring the bell known as Roland. Nor were the citizens satisfied until they had executed the principal ministers of their last Duke. The atrocities of the individual ruler are treasured up by the historian, those of the masses or the mob are consigned to an indulgent oblivion.

What the citizens of Ghent wrested from the last Duchess of Burgundy they kept under her youthful son, Philip the Fair. They held him as a hostage against his father, the Archduke Maximilian, who overran much of the Provinces with a German army. One of the incidents of the struggle was when the citizens of Bruges locked Maximilian up in the Craenenburg, and kept him there for three months. He was only released on giving his promise by oath to abstain from further interference in the government, and to leave his son in the hands of the Flemings. It is not surprising that Maximilian took the oath to recover his freedom, but it is surprising that he was believed. No sooner had he got to a safe distance than he repudiated his promises, and he returned in a few months with a large German army to besiege Ghent, which had thrown in its fortunes with Bruges.

This was the turning-point in the history of the great Flemish communes. In bad as in good fortune they had up to this managed to hold their own in the struggle with their feudal and hereditary rulers. But they were now confronted by a more formidable master, who had behind him the big battalions of the German Empire. The citizens did not appreciate the change until it was too late. Bruges and Ghent were compelled to pay enormous fines, and by the treaties of Damme and Cadzand they surrendered their privileges. The wounded dignity of Maximilian for his imprisonment was further appeased by the execution of a considerable number of the leading citizens of the two cities.

Such was the situation at the dawn of the sixteenth century, when the citizens of Ghent, laying aside their political ambitions, applied themselves to the development of their trade and industry. The pacific rule of Margaret of Austria, sister of Philip the Fair, acting in the name of her young nephew who became Charles V, was highly favorable to their designs, and it was freely said that the prosperity of Ghent had never been greater than it was in the first half of the sixteenth century. In the hour of their greatest prosperity the people of Ghent brought down upon themselves the wrath and punishment of their prince. Some contemporary writers declared that there had been a decay in the manners and character of the citizens—one of them wrote: "The old represent that everything is

changed in the customs of our citizens, and they complain that instead of simple, frank, loyal, courageous, robust, and tall men a generation has succeeded corrupted by vice, idleness, ambition, and pride."

In 1536 the Emperor, for the purposes of war with France, demanded a subsidy from Flanders, and the city of Ghent was called upon to provide a third of the total. The citizens refused to pay, and finding that the prince had no available means to compel them to do so, they grew defiant. They formed an association among themselves to carry on the government of their city, and they invited Francis of France to aid them against their liege lord. Unfortunately for them that monarch had just signed a ten years' peace with his old rival, and he dismissed their envoys with cold comfort. Still the citizens were full of confidence in themselves, and to show their contempt for the Emperor they executed his chief representative, Lieven Pym, who told them with his dying breath they would be sorry when "too late." They acted thus recklessly in the belief that as the Emperor was in Spain, and had many things to attend to, it would certainly be a long time before he could think of them.

All their expectations were falsified by the act of the French King, who sent Charles a pressing invitation to travel through France so that he might be able to promptly chastise his mutinous subjects. The offer, unusual in those days, was accepted, and in February, 1540, Charles appeared before Ghent at the head of a

chosen army. Resistance would have been futile; none was attempted. Having occupied the city with his troops, Charles made a solemn entry at the head of his generals and courtiers. A formal indictment was drafted, and Ghent was placed on its trial. The verdict was delivered with all the proper observances, and after due deliberation the Emperor solemnly ratified it. Seven—not nineteen, as Motley says—of the men who judicially murdered Lieven Pym were executed, but that was the full extent of the bloodshed. The Emperor's sentence was directed against institutions and not men—but in its way it could not have been more severe. The sentence began by depriving the town "body and community" of all its privileges in perpetuity. It was deprived of municipal government, and the guilds as well as the city lost their charters. All sheriffs and magistrates were to be appointed by the Emperor alone. Public property, including artillery, was to be ceded to the Emperor, and the famous Roland, which had so often given tongue to the discontent of the land, and summoned the people to arms, was cast down and sentenced to eternal silence. In addition, the city had to pay not only the refused subsidy, but a heavy fine. Finally, the chief citizens had to make humble penitence in their shirts barefooted, and with halters round their necks. Thus, after five centuries, ended the special privileges and political importance of Ghent, the city associated in the English mind with the names of James van Artevelde and John of Gaunt.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE STORY OF LIEGE

**A**T many periods, notably during the troubles of the sixteenth century, Liège lay outside the general stream of Belgian life, and enjoyed an independent existence. The separate story of the Liège principality is certainly the least-known part of Belgian history, and no doubt this is to be attributed to the fact that in the Middle Ages events in Flanders and Brabant had rarely any influence on the future of Liège. It was the one division of Belgium not included in the Burgundian Union. The single incident of the capture of the city by Charles the Bold, told by Scott in "Quentin Durward" with magnificently audacious plagiarism from the pages of Commynes, probably exhausts the ordinary reader's knowledge of a State which existed for the better part of a thousand years.

In the tenth century a great prelate, equally energetic as social reformer and as curber of the feudal barons for the exaltation of the Church, founded the clerical State which existed more or less separately from its neighbors down to the French Revolution. It was long a saying among its people: "Liège owes Notger to Christ, and everything else to Notger."

But three centuries before Notger, Liège was the capital of the Dukes of Austria, and Charlemagne was the first to transfer it to Aix-la-Chapelle.

Once established in the seat of authority, the bishops showed their capacity for administration. Animated by a single purpose, free of the petty rivalries which were the bane of the feudal system, they carried on a deliberate and continuous policy. What one bishop left half done his successor completed, and the Bishopric of Liège, which had been regarded as a place of retreat for penitent or invalid Austrian dukes, soon became a power in the land. Indeed, at the dawn of the twelfth century it looked quite possible that the whole of Belgium might fall into its sphere.

The Crusades gave the bishops a favorable chance of aggrandizement, and they availed themselves of it. For that remote expedition money was necessary, and as the laws forbade the ordinary citizen from dealing in money which was restricted to Lombards and Jews, there was none available among the classes from which the expeditions were drawn. But the Church was independent of the law—or rather its law was supreme—and in its hands the gifts of many generations of pious donors had accumulated. It had become the great if not the only capitalist.

The sinews of war for the first and second Crusades were provided then by the Church, and by no branch of that great organization more largely than by the Bishopric of Liège. But it has never been the

practice of men, whether marked by a tonsure or not, to give without receiving an equivalent. The bishops helped Godfrey of Bouillon to equip his forces, but they took from him his castle and the feudal rights he enjoyed as Marquis of Antwerp and Lord of Malines. They also helped the Count of Hainaut, but it was at the price of his placing his county under the suzerainty of Liège. But powerful as was the Bishop of Liège, he was not powerful enough to stand alone. He had to lean on somebody, and Notger's successor at the dawn of the eleventh century had been proclaimed Prince of the Empire on recognizing the temporal sovereignty of the Emperor of Germany. The aggrandizement, therefore, of the bishopric entailed an extension of German influence, but ultimately Liège became the least German and most intensely French of all the divisions of Belgium. This characteristic was never more noticeable than it is today.

The triumph of the bishops over the nobles has been noted; there remains now to summarize the long struggle for power between the bishops and the people. It must, however, be recorded that the first popular rights and privileges at Liège were conferred by the Bishop on the people. These were embodied in the famous "tribunal of peace" which formed the charter of the citizens of Liège for over four centuries. This Court sat in the Cathedral, the burgesses beside the Bishop, and dispensed summary justice on



all alike — only priests and princes being exempted from its jurisdiction.

As a court of law the Peace tribunal answered its purpose very well, but the growth of civic liberty and rights could not be restrained. The guilds and corporations took on themselves more and more the functions of political power, and the clerical position was sometimes weakened by the tyranny of a bad bishop like Henry of Gueldres.

The citizens aimed chiefly, however, at the overthrow, not of the Bishop, but of the aristocratic families who had seized all the civic posts and made them hereditary, and in the struggle the Bishop often sided with the people. It reached a crisis in the year 1312 when, on the death of the Bishop, the nobles chose one regent and the citizens another. Five hundred armed nobles entered the city hoping to carry all before them. Instead they were vanquished by the superior numbers of the citizens, driven into the ancient church of St. Martin, and destroyed with the sacred edifice by fire. A new law was made to the effect that all city officers were to be chosen by the people from the people.

The peace of Fexhe (1315) embodied this and much more in its articles. It prescribed an appeal to the people in the event of any serious difference or doubt, and was long known as the great charter of Liège. Speaking of this period, M. de Villenfagne, the historian of Walloon Belgium, has written: "The

principality of Liège, comprising Condroz, Hesbaye the countdom of Looz, the marquisate of Franchimont, the lordship of Bouillon, and of the territory between the Sambre and Meuse, formed at this time (1390) a sort of Federal Republic. The ruling power having belonged first to the aristocracy and then to the Bishop, passed into the hands of the people as represented by the three Estates of the country."

Having gained all the privileges of a free city, the people of Liège became arrogant, and thought they could defy the House of Burgundy which had just welded the whole of Belgium, with the exception of the part subject to Liège itself, into a united State, including Holland and a large part of northern and eastern France as well. The power of the Government as represented by the Duke had never been so preponderant, and Liège should have taken warning from the recent fate of Ghent at the battle of Gavre. Unfortunately for them the citizens were rather carried away by the belief that French aid would be forthcoming, and, therefore, their replies to Philip the Good and his son Charles the Bold were couched in haughty and defiant language. Even a minor defeat at Morte-naeken in 1465 did not bring them to their senses, and when the real struggle began in the following year, the citizens were still sanguine of success. The first incident of this was the siege and capture of Dinant, where a population numbering 60,000 was wiped out.

In the following year Liège, after one defeat in the field, signed an ignominious treaty recognizing the supremacy of the Duke by allowing his representative to reside in the city. But this humility was assumed, for in 1468 they again defied him and imprisoned his representative. The incident occurred, as described in "Quentin Durward," while Louis XI was the guest of Charles the Bold at Peronne. Louis, to save his life, agreed to accompany Charles on his expedition of punishment, and was present at the capture and sack of Liège when 40,000 of the citizens are said to have been slaughtered, many of the women being thrown into the Meuse from the Bridge of Arches. It is declared that every building was demolished with the exception of the churches and convents. Finally the city made "renunciation for all its liberties" by a humble delegation of its chief citizens to Brussels. Thus was an end put to the rule of the citizens of Liège, which a little earlier had been called a "Federal Republic."

Soon after these events evil days fell on Burgundy. Granson, Morat, and Nancy followed in quick succession, and the dream of founding a third kingdom in northwest Europe that should be the equal of France crumbled in the dust. The power of the Bishop of Liège revived. Louis of Bourbon, supported by the Pope, succeeded in restoring some order to the city's affairs, and might have done better if he had not been assassinated by William de la Marck, "the wild boar of the Ardennes." During the reign of Charles V

Liège did not assert itself, but prosperity was gradually returning, and the city succeeded in keeping the combattants during the religious wars outside its boundaries. When Alva and William the Silent were coming to close quarters in the Meuse Valley, Bishop Groesbeck maintained his neutrality by warning off the belligerents.

As time went on Groesbeck's successors, who were chiefly Bavarian princes, experienced increasing difficulty with the citizens who, having secured the nominal revival of the old charters, sought to give them their full ancient significance. More especially did they claim that all the city affairs should be controlled by the council of "thirty-two," to which the the burgesses elected twenty-six and the Bishop only six members. One of the striking episodes of this struggle was the assassination of La Ruelle, the burgomaster and a friend of the French connection. He was betrayed by a fellow-plotter, the Count de Warfusée, who did not benefit by his treachery, for he was torn in pieces by the people of Liège as soon as they discovered his crime. The Bishop then invoked the Emperor's aid and a large German force captured the city. The burgomasters and many of their colleagues were executed in front of the Hotel de Ville. It was then that the Bishop caused the Citadel to be built on the summit of St. Walburga's Mountain.

From time to time the citizens had expressed sympathy with France. This was much diminished by the

exactions of the French army, which occupied Liége from 1670 to 1676. On leaving, they destroyed the citadel, and the citizens believing that with it had also disappeared the Bishop's power, resumed their rights. This step proved more than ever disastrous. The Emperor lent the Bishop an army to recover his position. Such resistance as the citizens attempted was easily overcome, and their leaders were executed on the public place. The old charters were cancelled, all political power was revoked from the guilds, which became simply artistic or industrial associations. To further consolidate the Bishop's power, the Citadel was to be rebuilt, and a new fort constructed half way across the Bridge of Arches. It was not many years after this event that an English army under Marlborough attacked and captured the citadel, but the English troops did not occupy the city.

At the end of another century Liége witnessed a fresh attempt by the people to recover their rights, and it had rather a curious origin. A dispute as to the distribution of the profits of the Spa gambling tables ended in the citizens naming two of their order as Chief Magistrates, and in the flight of Bishop Hoensbroeck to Treves. The citizens claimed a free national assembly, but the German Court of Wetzlar ordered them to return to their obedience, and sent a German army to enforce it. On this occasion the triumph of the Bishop by the aid of German arms was not long-lived. But a few months later the French overrun and

conquered Belgium. For over twenty years Liège formed part of France; indeed the connection only terminated with the arrival of a Prussian force in January, 1814. After Napoleon's escape from Elba, Blücher made his headquarters at Liège during the spring of 1815, and it was there that he narrowly escaped being shot at the hands of some mutinous Saxon soldiers, by jumping out of the window of his hotel. Whatever else it had failed to do, the French Revolution certainly killed the Prince Bishopric of Liège. It had found it a sort of Power in Europe, it left it without any prospect of revival. Europe then placed Liège in the hands of the King of the Netherlands with the rest of Belgium.

The people of Liège contributed to the success of the Belgian revolution of 1830 more than any other city excepting Brussels. They had fought for centuries for civic rights, they now had the chance of fighting for national independence, and they took it. Without any outside assistance they captured from the Dutch garrisons the Citadel and the Chartreuse fort. They sent to Brussels the Volunteer Battalion which distinguished itself in the four days' fighting with the Dutch army in the Park. Finally, they furnished three of the heroes of the whole movement, Charles Rogier, Joseph Lebeau, and "the wooden-legged gunner," Charlier.

There is one little matter affecting the name of the place that may be dealt with here in a few lines. The

accenting of the "e" in the name has given rise to a considerable diversity of practice, and whether because it is easier to be wrong than to be right, the erroneous practice has prevailed. It has been the universal practice in England to mark the "e" with the *accent "grave,"* thus, Liège. In former days many French writers did so, and some Belgians. It is just to Bouillet, Littré, and other sound etymologists to say that they did not fall into the error. They give it correctly with the *accent aigu* as Liége. Now what is the significance of the difference for the ordinary reader? It is simply that the correct pronunciation is as two clearly distinct syllables — "Lee-aje." This approximates most nearly to the Walloon (the local dialect) name, which is "Le-ege."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE BELGIAN CONSTITUTION

**S**OME dates and facts as to the way in which the Belgian Constitution was drafted and passed into law will be of use to the general reader.

In 1815 the Vienna Congress declared that the South or old Spanish Netherlands were to be joined to Holland, and to form the Kingdom of the United Netherlands under the sovereign rule of the House of Orange Nassau. This union lasted for fifteen years. Various grievances developed during that period, and the Belgians considered that they were treated with some harshness by the Dutch. The French Revolution of July, 1830, when the absolutist Bourbon monarchy was superseded by the constitutional Orleanist régime, greatly increased the confidence of the Belgians in themselves and their cause by leading them to think that the French nation would sympathize with and second their efforts to achieve their own independence. The first disturbance occurred in Brussels during the night of August 25-26, 1830, after a performance at the opera of the "Muett de Portici," when Massaniello's appeal for the emancipation of his country inflamed the audience and set fire to the aspirations of the public. Opinions differ as to whether the scene



had been carefully prepared, or whether it was one of those impromptus that constitute the eternal fitness of things. At any rate, the night was passed in plundering and destroying the houses of some of the Ministers and others identified in the public mind with the Dutch régime. The Belgian revolution then began.

Its second and more important phase covered the four days, September 23-26. The Dutch decided to recover Brussels by force, and sent an army to capture it. The troops succeeded after some severe street fighting in reaching the Park facing the Royal Palace, but they had marched into a trap. Instead of crushing the citizens and recovering the city, they found themselves besieged in the Park, and more or less cut off from their communications. The incidents of the fighting that went on for four days showed that regular troops have little superiority over armed citizens in street fighting, and on September 26 the Dutch extricated themselves from their false position by retreating during the night, leaving however, 1,500 killed behind them. The Belgian revolution, which most observers outside the country had affected to regard as of trivial moment, then became a matter of European importance.

A week after the withdrawal of the Dutch troops the Provisional Government which had been carrying on the administration in Brussels, issued the Decree of Independence. Its terms deserve quotation:

"Art I. The province of Belgium detached by force from Holland shall constitute an INDEPENDENT STATE.

"Art. II. The Central Committee will occupy itself as soon as possible with the draft of a Constitution.

"Art. III. A National Congress representing all the interests of the Provinces shall be convoked. It will examine the bill drafted for a Belgian Constitution, modify it as it thinks proper, and then will make it the definitive Constitution of force throughout Belgium."

The drafting of the Constitution was entrusted to a special commission, and at its first meeting the important question was raised and decided as to the form the new government should take. There had been some irresponsible talk of creating a Belgian Republic. The commission decided that the government should be a hereditary constitutional monarchy, and when the point was raised before the National Congress some weeks later, it was promptly decided in the same sense.

The commission took three months in accomplishing its task, and at the end of January, 1831, it presented the Congress with the draft of a Constitution consisting of 139 Articles. As the Congress had discussed and decided what may be called the vital principles underlying the Articles of the Constitution concurrently with the labors of the commission, the draft bill did not require alteration, and after a week's formal discussion it was passed into law on February 7.

The Constitution bill contained 139 Articles, one of which (No. 31) provided for the right to revise it should a future occasion arise to make it desirable or necessary. Having defined the character of the monarchy to be established, and the administrative divisions of the kingdom which by ancient tradition contained nine provinces, the law proceeded to set forth the constitutional functions of the respective powers in the State. The King was relieved of responsibility by the simple regulation that all his acts had to be countersigned by one of his ministers, who thereby became responsible for what was done. The King had, however, one or two privileges that do not fall, as a rule, to the constitutional monarch. He could dissolve the Chambers, and he could also initiate legislation by decreeing that a draft bill (*projet de loi*) should be prepared on any specific matter of an urgent character. The King was also declared commander-in-chief of the army and navy, the latter of which did not and does not yet exist. When Leopold I read the constitution law through before accepting the crown, he made the caustic remark: "You seem to have left your King very little to do."

§ The executive and legislative powers in the State were divided between the King, the Chamber of Representatives, and the Senate. The Chamber of Representatives originally consisted of 102 members chosen by the duly qualified electors of the country, who, until 1894, were few in number. In that year

the Representatives had increased to 152. A general election had to be held every four years, and at the end of two years half the members had to seek re-election. Of course, Ministers had the right, in common with the King, of dissolving the Parliament at any time and appealing to the country, but the right has been very sparingly used. Members of the Chamber must be not less than twenty-five years of age, and since 1894 they have been paid a salary of \$800 on the stipulation of regular attendance. They are also furnished with a free railway pass from the seat of their constituency to the capital.

The strength of the Senate or Second Chamber was originally fixed at fifty-one members, but in 1893 the total was raised to 102, seventy-six being elected by the qualified electors, and twenty-six being nominated by the Provincial Councils. A senator sits for eight years. He receives no payment, and no one is eligible for a seat in the Upper House under the age of forty. It may be mentioned, as a distinctive feature of the Belgian system, that Ministers who may be taken indiscriminately from either the Senate or the Chamber of Representatives, have the right of speaking in both Houses as occasion may arise. The King's sons or other Princes of the Royal Family become by right members of the Senate on reaching the age of eighteen, but they have no vote until they are twenty-five years old. A bill must be approved of by both Houses before it can be submitted to the King for the

necessary Royal decree to make it law. Consequently, the possibility of an unseemly collision between the two Chambers in so far as it would threaten to involve the name or person of the King is eliminated by the Belgian constitution. No Belgian minister could talk of inviting or compelling the Sovereign to be the ally or tool of the Lower House in coercing the Upper, and a proposal to flood an ancient Chamber with new immigrants would be derisive when the total number of occupants is fixed by law. There are some good points to be borrowed from the young Belgian constitution.

At the time of the passing of the constitution into law, in February, 1831, no sovereign had been selected for the Belgian throne. Five months later Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was inaugurated as King of the Belgians in Brussels, thus founding the Coburg dynasty which still occupies the throne. The constitution provided that the crown was to be vested in the male line to the perpetual exclusion of females, but in the event of the failure of all male heirs the King was to have the right of nominating his successor with the consent of the Chambers. Should he not have made such a nomination, the throne would be "declared vacant" on his death, and the Chambers elected in double strength for the occasion would then proceed to elect a new ruler.

At one period it seemed not impossible that such an occasion might arise. Leopold I, who at the time

of his accession was a widower (having married in 1816 the Princess Charlotte of England, who died in childbirth the following year), married in 1832 the Princess Louise of Orleans, daughter of Louis Philippe, King of the French, and by her had a family of three sons and one daughter. The eldest son died when he was less than a year old. The second son, Leopold, born in 1835, succeeded his father in 1865, the second of his name, and reigned for nearly forty-five years. His death took place in December, 1909. The third son was Philip, Count of Flanders, born in 1837 and died in 1905, and the only daughter, Charlotte, the unhappy Empress of Mexico, is still living. Leopold II, who married in 1853 the Archduchess Marie Henrietta of Austria, had only one son, who bore the title of Duke of Brabant, and died in 1869 in his tenth year. The reversion to the throne thus passed to the Count of Flanders, who had married in 1867 the Princess Mary of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen. The issue of this marriage was two sons and two daughters. As the Salic Law prevails, it is unnecessary to say anything either of these princesses or of the three daughters of Leopold II, all of whom survive.

The two sons of the Count of Flanders were named Baudouin (Baldwin) and Albert. Prince Baudouin, who was extremely popular with the people, died suddenly in 1891 without having married. There remained only his brother Albert to prevent the Belgian

royal family from extinction in the male line. For some years the situation gave rise to considerable anxiety, but Prince Albert's marriage in 1900 to the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of the late Duke Charles Theodore of Bavaria, followed by the birth of two sons named Leopold and Charles, removed all ground for apprehension, and assured the succession in the male line. In December, 1909, Prince Albert succeeded his uncle as Albert I, and he and his wife, Queen Elizabeth, who is renowned for her charitable deeds, have begun what promises to prove a new era in Belgian history. Their sons are now known by the historic titles of Duke of Brabant and Count of Flanders respectively.

But the Belgian Constitution did a great deal more than found and define a constitutional monarchy. It provided for the liberties of a people in a manner then almost without example in Europe. It is rare indeed to find legislators more animated by the principles of true freedom for individuals as well as the community than were the framers of the Belgian Constitution in 1830-31. The modern politician seems bent on devising new forms of tyranny which are more irritating than those favored by the most absolute sovereigns. The Belgian Solons displayed a remarkable tolerance not only for their own views, but for those of their fellow citizens. For instance, Belgium was a Catholic country—in the old constitution the Church had been one of the States—the overwhelming majority of the

people were devoted followers of the Church of Rome. Yet one of the Articles of the Constitution separates church and state, and lays down the law that all cults are equal and free. Another ordains that no one was to be interfered with or disqualified for public service or office on account of his religious opinions. These provisions for religious tolerance and equality were all the more remarkable because no popular movement existed to force or induce the Legislature to adopt them. They might be styled voluntary efforts in the quest of supposed perfection or at least of unfettered liberty. It may be added that the establishment of religious equality has not led to any change in the religion of the people. A Protestant propaganda has never had any chance of success in the Southern Netherlands.

Although the influence of the Church did not avail to prevent its deposition from the privileged place it had enjoyed in the State from time immemorial, it was felt that it would not be in accordance with the fitness of things to allow of a non-Catholic prince ruling a Catholic people, and it was consequently stipulated that the King should be of the Catholic religion. But here again the extraordinary broad-mindedness of the Belgian legislators was revealed, for during the first thirty-five years of its national independence, Belgium was ruled by a Protestant King because Leopold I declined to change his religion. His children were, however, brought up as Catholics in accordance with the



Constitution and also with the marriage contract signed at Compiègne on the occasion of his marriage with the French Princess.

Among the salient vital principles embodied in the Constitution were freedom of the press, of the person and of the right of meeting. Nowhere has the press been more free and nowhere has the individual citizen been more secure against press attack than in Belgium. The sensational journalism to which we have grown painfully accustomed is unknown in Belgium. No Belgian citizen is ever accused or exposed in the papers until he has been condemned and sentenced by a court of justice. The accused and their relations are spared by the adoption of asterisks and initials instead of names. It may be due to the smallness of the country, but at least Belgian procedure is considerate of the feelings of the innocent bearers of an unusual name. Among other important changes introduced by the new Constitution was the abolition of the forfeiture of civil rights and of the confiscation of property. The right of public meeting, which includes that of street processions, is absolute with the sole reservation that during the session of the Legislature there is a prohibited area round the Parliament House and Royal Palace.

Everybody knows that Belgium is a neutral State, but contrary to what seems to be generally supposed, this neutrality was not a condition imposed by the Belgians on themselves. There is not a word in the Con-

stitution on the subject. It was a condition imposed on Belgium by the Great Powers as the price for their recognition of her existence. The Belgians were quick to see the advantage of the new arrangement which would save their country from again being turned into the cockpit of Europe, and far from raising any objection on the ground of its being an interference in their internal affairs, they welcomed the proposal. Now the Powers were not thinking of the Belgians when they came to this decision, but of themselves; and the problem in their own mind was how to compose their own rivalries and discords so that the balance of power might be preserved. A few facts as to how this arrangement was brought about, and as to its precise meaning may be appropriately added here to the description already given of the Constitution, for the neutrality of Belgium is an essential feature in its political existence.

When the Belgians revolted, and showed that they were likely to bring their revolution to a successful issue, the Five Powers (England, France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia) at once came together and opened the London Conference. The first decisions as to the future status of Belgium in Europe were contained in the document known as the "Eighteen Articles," which was signed in London on June 26, 1831. The 9th and 10th Articles defined what was the first view and intention of the Powers on the subject of Belgian neutrality, and the following is their text:

"Art. 9. Belgium within the limits traced in conformity with the principles laid down in the present preliminaries shall form a *perpetually neutral State*. The five Powers, without wishing to intervene in the internal affairs of Belgium, *guarantee her that perpetual neutrality as well as the integrity and inviolability of her territory* in the limits mentioned in the present Article.

"Art. 10. By just reciprocity Belgium shall be held to observe this same neutrality towards all the other States and to make no attack on their internal or external tranquility whilst preserving the right to defend herself against every foreign aggression."

The passages in italics show that in June, 1831, the Powers were disposed to guarantee Belgium against attack and invasion as a sort of return for imposing on her a condition of permanent neutrality.

But events led to the abandonment of the Eighteen Articles, and to the substitution in their place of the Twenty-four Articles, which were eventually embodied in the binding treaties. The definition of Belgium's neutrality (although none the less fettering on her action) in the later instrument is far less clearly defined or binding on the Powers than it was in the earlier. One brief Article was deemed sufficient, and read as follows:

"Art. 7. Belgium, within the limits specified in Articles 1, 2, and 4 *shall form an independent and perpetually neutral State*. She shall be bound to observe this same neutrality towards all other States."

While pundits in international law will keenly discuss the significance of the very marked difference in

language employed in the two sets of Articles, there remains clear the one essential fact—that Belgium was deemed in the eyes of the Powers, and had to accept as the price of their recognition of her existence the statute of, a “perpetually neutral State.”

Belgium's neutrality in international law comes under the heading of “imposed” or “obligatory” neutrality as contradistinguished from the “voluntary neutrality” of Switzerland.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PARTY POLITICS IN BELGIUM

**B**EFORE dealing with the question of Party Politics in Belgium and the attitude of the several parties in the State towards each other, it will be well to give some statistics and other essential particulars as to the composition of the legislature, the system of election, the electorate, and the various changes that have from time to time been introduced into the political government of the country.

By the original Constitution of the country drafted in 1830-31, the legislative powers were vested in the King, the Chamber of Representatives, and the Senate. By the law of March 3, 1831, there were to be 102 Representatives and fifty-one Senators, and the rule that there were to be twice as many of the former as of the latter was observed through all the changes until that of 1893, when the Senate was increased in proportional numerical strength by the addition of twenty-seven permanent provincial members. In June, 1839, the principle of one representative per 40,000 of the population was introduced with the consequence that the Chamber was reduced to ninety-five members and the Senate to forty-seven. A law having to be passed on each occasion of an increase in

the Chambers, it may be interesting to record what they have been. In 1847, the number was raised to 108 representatives and 54 senators; in 1859 to 116 and 58 respectively; in 1866 to 124 and 62; in 1878 to 132 and 66; in 1882 to 138 and 69; in 1892 to 152 and 76; in 1893 to 152 and 102; and in 1902 to 166 and 110. Once the principle is understood, it is easy to follow the fluctuations by comparison with the growth of population.

With regard to the system of election and the body of the electorate, a general election for the Chamber of Representatives must at the longest interval take place every four years and for the Senate every eight years, the Sovereign having the power with or without the assent of the Premier to dissolve the Chambers and compel an appeal to the country at any time. At the commencement of a new reign a dissolution takes place automatically. There is another point, half the Chamber has to be re-elected at the expiration of two years from any general election, and half the Senate at that of four years.

The number of electors was extremely limited from 1831 to 1892. In 1832 there were 45,000 voters, in 1848, 80,000, and in 1892 the electorate only numbered 136,775 in a population of six and a half millions. By the new law passed in 1893 the number of electors was increased to 1,354,891, who, by the plural vote passed at the same time held 2,085,605 votes.

These numbers had increased to 1,472, 953 voters and 2,269,414 votes in 1900.

The Belgian legislature was created in a time of national peril, and in face, as it were, of the enemy. At such a moment it might be said with truth that "none were for a party, but all were for the State." Political parties did not exist. The executive members were chosen more or less from both sides, and formed what was called the party of Union. This happy condition of things could not be expected to last longer than the circumstances which rendered it possible. The passing of the national peril revived the ceaseless turmoil of faction fighting. Some one has said that popular assemblies only exist for the purpose of useless and unedifying broiling in which words take the place of lethal weapons, and then has added as an after-tribute to their utility, "but they let off dangerous steam." For all the useful work that is done a council of six wise men would do far better. For this reason the first fifteen years of Belgian independence were full of wise and beneficent public measures as well as free from party discord

The note of change was struck in 1846, when the first Liberal Congress was held in Brussels. The Liberal party was then provided with a definite program and an efficient organization. Having thus got the start of the Catholics or Conservatives, it was not surprising that the Liberals should be returned with a great majority at the general election of 1847, and

they remained in office with two intervals, one brief and the other longer, until 1884. For the first half of that long period the Liberal leader was M. Charles Rogier, a true patriot who had done as much as any individual to make the Belgian Revolution successful. His successor in the second half of the period was M. Frère-Orban, a brilliant orator and the chief of the "doctrinaires." The revolution of 1848 found Belgium controlled by Liberal influences, and it was one of the few Continental States that escaped the cataclysm of that trying and critical epoch.

The partial election of 1852 was less favorable to the Liberals than they had expected, and as they were divided amongst themselves, it provided an opportunity of once more forming a mixed administration without any definite party color or aggressive program. It held the balance between the extremists on the difficult question of religious instruction in secondary schools, and when the general election of 1854 resulted in the return for the first time of a Catholic majority, it seemed as if the period of calm might not be interrupted.

The new premier was M. Pierre de Decker—a Catholic of moderate views and the first Fleming to appear among Belgian politicians—and his brief tenure of power is chiefly memorable because it witnessed an exceedingly bitter encounter between Catholics and Liberals. This was the more remarkable because there can be no question of his moderation, and the



violence of the attack on his measures was due, not to their purport, but to the opinion among the Liberal leaders that in this way alone could they return to office. The Catholic party had a majority in the Chamber, therefore M. Frère-Orban appealed to the masses. The threat of a revolution was made, and for the first time in the history of constitutional Belgium street demonstrations were the order of the day. It was so well known that these were engineered by those desirous of returning to office that the agitation was called "the kid-gloved revolution." However, the Premier lost his nerve and resigned. The Liberals returned to office in 1857, and remained there without a break till 1870.

The elections of 1860 and 1864 were remarkable for the first appearance of the advanced Liberals, who wished to give legislative effect to the extreme arguments used when Frère-Orban was in opposition and only thinking how best to get back to office. But Frère-Orban was quite a different person as Minister, and turned a deaf ear to all proposals to eliminate religious instruction from the school curriculum. The extreme left, led by M. Verhaegen in these years, was the precursor of the Socialist Party which has played so prominent a rôle in more recent days. By the time that the general election of 1870 was reached it had become clear that old party lines were breaking down, and that soon the Chamber would be divided among three parties. What was not expected was that

the swing of the pendulum towards Radicalism would bring the Catholic party into office. The electors of the country returned Conservative representatives with a clear majority over the two sections of the Liberal party.

This defeat at a moment when they fully counted on complete victory filled the Liberals with wrath, and they determined to make the position of the Catholic Ministry as uncomfortable as possible. The session of 1870-71 was particularly stormy, both inside and outside the Chamber. While prominent politicians spoke loudly of violations of the Constitution, bringing in the King's name, the mob demonstrated in the streets to cries for a republic, and serious events occurred in Brussels and Antwerp. In a certain degree these demonstrations were not without result. The Premier, an advanced Catholic, resigned in favor of one less extreme, and M. Jules Malou became Minister of Finance with a definite program for the improvement of labor conditions, the increase of the electorate, and the introduction of the ballot. As the Catholic party possessed a majority of twenty-two, the bitterness of party strife became somewhat allayed during the next two sessions, and in November, 1873, the King felt himself able to state that "calm and prosperous, Belgium in 1873 may be proud of the past and look at the future with serene confidence." At the general election of 1874 the Catholics found their

majority reduced to fourteen. The partial elections of 1876 further reduced it to twelve.

The year 1877 was remarkable for three important political events. Voting by ballot was introduced, the Chamber was increased by ten representatives and the Senate by five, and the first avowedly Socialist meeting was held at Ghent. The first election under the new system was held in June, 1878, when the Liberals secured a majority of twelve, and M. Frère-Orban returned to power. The Catholic party had done quite well enough during its eight years' tenure of office to remove the reproach that had often been made against it, that it did not know how to govern. During the critical period of the Franco-German War it had upheld the honor and neutrality of Belgium, and in the region of domestic affairs it had given the elector security in voting and ameliorated the conditions of the labor classes.

With the return of the Liberal party to power began one of the stormiest periods in Belgian history. The new Ministry resorted to a policy of what was called action, and which was really a course of aggression against everything their opponents held dear. They began by removing several Catholic governors of the provinces, diminishing the powers of the "Commissions Permanentes" (the highest division in the system of local self-government in Belgium), and flooding the civil and more especially the educational service with their own nominees. Having thus pre-

pared the way, they brought in their Education Bill, which was avowedly intended to deal a fatal blow to the Church by eliminating all religious instruction from primary schools. The measure was passed into law, and for five years "State instruction was placed under the exclusive control of the civil authorities." In consequence of this law one-third of the children left the primary State schools to join those which the Church established wherever they had the means. A rupture with the Vatican followed, and the bitterness of the strife between the Catholics and Liberals was shown by the refusal of the Church to take any part in the national festivities held in 1880 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Belgian independence.

Notwithstanding the efforts made by the Catholic party under the able and energetic direction of M. Malou to improve their organization and rouse the country, the partial elections of 1880 increased the Liberal majority by four votes. The Liberals, however, had troubles of their own. Far as M. Frère-Orban had gone, he had not gone anything like far enough to satisfy the extreme wing of his followers. During the session of 1881 M. Janson and his band of Radicals demanded Universal Suffrage and threatened to upset the government unless it brought in a bill to that effect. M. Frère-Orban refused to give way on this point, and as a "doctrinaire" favored a restricted instead of an enlarged franchise. The utmost concession he would make was the granting of a vote for

an educational qualification to be established by public examination. The Radical section, finding its position less strong than it had imagined, withdrew its demand, but from that moment dated the bitterness of the relations between the two sections of the Liberal party. It was said with some truth that much as they hated the Catholics, they hated each other more.

Under these conditions the time arrived for holding the general election of 1884. The Liberals never doubted that their triumph was assured and that they had the country behind them in their education policy. They were destined to experience a rude disillusion. They went to the country with a majority that had gradually swelled in six years from twelve to twenty. They returned in a minority of thirty-four. Eighty-six Catholics were elected as against fifty-two Liberals of all sections. M. Malou again became Premier, and his first act showed his determination to undo the measures of the fallen administration. He suppressed the separate post of Minister of Public Instruction, adding his functions to those of the Minister of the Interior. In the Senate the "doctrinaire" party still possessed a majority, and before organic changes could be made it was necessary for the Catholics to have a sure majority there also. The Senate sits for eight years, as already explained, and in 1884 the period of its re-election had not arrived. It was necessary for it to be dissolved for re-election, and the

result of this was that the Catholics obtained in the new Senate a majority of seventeen.

Having thus insured the passing of its legislative measures, M. Manlou's government proceeded to abrogate the education law passed by its predecessors, and to introduce a new one leaving primary education in the hands of the Communes. In this way religious instruction was restored in the schools which received State subsidies. The passing of this measure into law was accompanied by some sensational incidents. There were riots in Brussels and even talk of civil war. M. Malou retired from office as a calming measure, and was succeeded by M. Beernaert, who was less identified with the Church than his chief. Thus was the brief interregnum of purely secular instruction in Belgium terminated, and the system of education based on communal control has gone on undisturbed for twenty-five years and seems now to be firmly established.

The success of the Catholic party did not prove, as many expected it to be, ephemeral. The partial election of 1886 confirmed its triumph by raising its majority from thirty-four to fifty-six. In 1888 the moderate Liberals proposed to the advanced Radicals that they should combine for the purpose of the general election, but the offer was rejected with the result that the Catholic party achieved a more considerable triumph than it had on first coming into power. There

was another consequence. The internal feuds in the Liberal party became more bitter.

The political situation in the country was not as serene as the overwhelming majority of the Conservatives made it in the Chamber. The masses betrayed great discontent with their position and clamored for the redress of grievances, many of which were only too real. In no industrial country of the first rank was labor then less remunerated or carried out under harsher conditions than in Belgium. Undoubtedly the working classes occupied an intolerable position, and the redress of their hardships provided the only means of averting a revolution. Every year from 1886 to 1890 witnessed serious strikes and collisions between the strikers and the civil authorities. On more than one occasion the military had to be called out and bloodshed ensued. In one encounter near Charleroi as many as seventy men were killed. It was also noticed that every year the Socialist party showed better organization, and that its attacks in both the Chamber and the street were becoming more menacing. Thus it was high time to think of remedies. A commission was appointed to inquire into the state of labor and to provide remedies for popular grievances. It will suffice to say here that it did good work by raising the scale of pay, diminishing the hours of labor, and restricting the employment of women and children. The second of the remedies concerns us more

particularly in a sketch of party politics, for it relates to the franchise.

The Catholic party decided that they could no longer avoid an extension of the franchise. The Belgian Constitution was exceedingly liberal in its principles, but this did not alter the plain fact that Belgium, with a population of six millions in 1890, had only 134,437 voters. In the year just named the Chamber passed by a general vote a motion to the effect that Article 47 of the Constitution (the one fixing the qualification of electors) required revision. The next thing was to discover how it could be carried out. The Government wished to raise the total to 600,000 voters based on a small property qualification, but it was found impossible to find a minimum that would satisfy the exigencies of the case. Under these circumstances there was no practical remedy but giving all citizens a vote on the basis of an age minimum and residential qualification. This measure, if left alone, would have gone very near to the universal suffrage demanded by the Socialists. The balance was redressed by the invention of the plural vote, which added one or two votes for each elector possessing special defined qualifications. Before describing the new franchise it may be appropriate to give the King's speech in opening the session which saw the passing of this great legislative reform:

"The Belgian Constitution is today the most ancient of the Continent. It has brought our dear coun-



try a long succession of years of peace and fruitful development. Like you, I have more than once proclaimed its wisdom.

"But the works of men have only their period; institutions must be appropriate to their surroundings; and thanks to the progress accomplished, our institutions, which were noteworthy for their liberal features half a century ago, can today be made better and rejuvenated.

"This has led you in accordance with my government to the decision that there is room to examine several points of our political organization; and in the formal and special consultation prescribed by our fundamental pact, the electoral body of today has just given you a mandate to carry out a large extension of the right of suffrage.

"Other problems of the same order are attached thereto, and to solve them will be the essential object of the coming session.

"In subordinating the revision of the Constitution to the vote of an exceptional majority our fathers wished that it should not be possible for it to be the work of a party. It is in that spirit, Gentlemen, that proposals will be made to you by my government. It is in the same spirit, I do not doubt, that you will examine them, and the patriotic sentiments which animate your assemblies each time that a great national interest is at stake are a sure guaranty that the revised Constitution will be another work marked by concord, wisdom, and progress.

"There are in the life of nations historical hours when the decisions to be taken may exercise a decisive influence on their destinies. Such is the present moment for Belgium.

"You will bring to the examination of the problems placed before you a profound love of your country,

and the generous views more than ever demanded by the incessant progress of modern ideas."

It was not until the session of 1893 was well advanced that a definite scheme was elaborated and passed into law. The new qualifications are set forth in the following statement, and it only remains to add that they are those which are at present in force.

"One vote for every Belgian citizen on reaching the age of twenty-five, and who has resided for one year in the same commune.

"One extra vote for every elector on reaching the age of thirty-five who is married, or if a widower who has legitimate descendants provided that he pays one dollar of direct taxation, or shows that he is exempt from such payment.

"Two extra votes for every elector who is proprietor of real estate with a minimum cadastral revenue of \$9.60, or who shows that he derives the sum of \$20 yearly from an investment in the State Stocks or Savings Banks.

"(or) Two extra votes for every elector (1) holding diplomas of various descriptions enumerated in Art. 17; or (2) holding government posts or public dignities enumerated in Art. 19.

"Maximum number of votes for any elector is three."

In addition to the creation of the plural vote a further defense for society was formed in the increase of the Senate in numbers and by importing into it a more permanent element. The numbers of the Senate as fixed by the original law were to be half those of the Chamber, and the law of 1893 made no change in this respect. These members were elected

for eight years, half retiring for re-election at the expiration of four years. But the new law introduced a new element. The Provincial Councils were to delegate twenty-seven representatives to the Senate, and these nominees of the Nine Provinces sit independently of all elections.

It was computed that the new law created 1,200,000 electors who would possess 1,900,000 votes. Notwithstanding the ingenious innovation of the plural vote the Conservatives naturally regarded with no little trepidation the possible outcome of this surrender to the demands of the democracy. The election of 1892, under the old system, had given a return of ninety-three Catholics to fifty-nine Liberals of all shades. Curiosity was naturally felt as to the results of the election of 1894 with the new franchise. It resulted in the return of 104 Catholics, twenty Liberals and Radicals, and twenty-eight Socialists. The old "doctrinaire" party was practically wiped out. The partial elections of 1896 further increased the Catholic majority, which then reached its highest point. The new Chamber contained 112 Catholics, only twelve Liberals, and twenty-eight Socialists.

The authors of the new franchise had conceived that it would greatly favor the Liberals, and as a further precaution for the protection of minorities M. Beernaert had proposed to supplement the plural vote with a measure of "proportional representation." His party would not support him, and therefore he re-

signed in 1894. The overwhelming Catholic majority in the Chamber, which was in excess of all proportion to the votes recorded for the several parties, was in itself an incitement to the attacks of their political adversaries. The Socialists, who had only twenty-eight seats for nearly half a million votes, clamored loudly for universal suffrage, while the Liberals and the moderate Catholics demanded the introduction of "proportional representation," which would certainly equalize the chances of all parties. It was amid riotous scenes in both the Chambers and the streets that the new reform was passed into law in 1899.

By the system of proportional representation Belgium is divided into a fixed number of electoral districts, and each district has the number of its members apportioned in accordance with the total strength of each party in it. As a rule, there are only three parties, but the presence of a Catholic Democrat would raise the total to four. The number of seats to be filled is divided by the number of parties, and then distributed in the proportion of the total votes recorded for each. By this system the smallest minority is certain of one seat. The following instance will perhaps make the system clear. An electoral district with 40,000 recorded votes returns seven members. Four parties contest it with the result that the total votes are: Catholics, 25,000; Liberals, 8,000; Socialists, 5,000; and Catholic Democrats, 2,000. The seven seats would then be distributed as follows: one to the

Catholic Democrat, one each to the Liberals and Socialists, and four to the Catholics.

Just as it had been anticipated that the new franchise would greatly favor the Liberals in 1894, so was it reckoned in 1899 that the introduction of proportional representation could not fail to be followed by a marked movement towards an equalization of parties. The estimate of the Liberals of the result of the 1900 election was a total of eighty Catholics as against seventy-two Liberals and Socialists, the two sections of the Left having sunk their differences for a time in the hope of shortening the term of Catholic power. Fourteen new seats had also been created, raising the total to 166. The result of the election showed ninety-five Catholics, thirty-five Liberals, thirty-four Socialists, and two Catholic Democrats, the Catholic majority being still twenty-four. As this majority has been steadily reduced at each subsequent election, the Liberal prophecy was not so far out as it at first appeared. In 1904 the majority fell to twenty, in 1906 to twelve, in 1908 to eight, and in 1910 to six, which is the present figure. The composition of the House is eighty-six Catholics, forty-four Liberals, thirty-five Socialists, and one Catholic Democrat. Lest it might be thought that a government possessing a majority of six is necessarily doomed to speedy extinction, it may be pointed out that for the Belgian legislature it forms a good working majority which only a sudden epidemic would cause to disappear. The payment of

the members (who since 1894 receive a salary of \$800 a year) insures regular attendance because it is the condition of receiving the stipend; the deliberateness with which business is carried on and the fact that there are no night sittings eliminate the risk of surprise motions and snap divisions; and therefore, provided no split takes place in the party itself, a majority of six is just as effective as one of sixty.

Reference has been made to the break-up and disunion of the Liberal party that went on for a long time after the fall of the doctrinaire party, and it is only right to say that the Liberals and Socialists have a common working program today which gives them equal chances at the hustings. Whether it would avail to enable them to form a joint administration should they succeed in beating the Catholics in 1912 is a question that had better be left till the event has occurred. A curious phenomenon in Belgium's political life is the appearance of a new section in the Catholic party, known as the Young Right. These politicians are far more liberal than the older Clericals, and their influence is for the moment in the ascendant. But it cannot be doubted that internal differences in what has so long been the solid phalanx of the Catholic party, are likely to bring sooner to an end the long tenure of power that it has enjoyed since 1884.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE ARMY

**A**S the Belgian army by the new law is through a transition stage, it is inevitable that the following description must apply to what will be then to what is. The following spoken by the present King Albert in the course of his speech he made in Brussels on January 7, 1909, will serve as a suitable introduction to what follows.

"The year that has just closed witnessed the coming into law of a great measure of reform, which we had called for with all our hearts. By the application of the principle of pre-emption, all classes of society are now equally engaged in the performance of their sacred duty, viz., the defense of our native land. In the future a really national army, both solid and numerous, will form for poor and rich alike a school of patriotism. Belgium will be able to rely on it for the preservation of her inviolable independence."

During the life of Leopold I the army was his first thought. He was never happy unless a hundred thousand well-trained troops could be put in the field with the promptitude required for the preservation of the country's neutrality; and before 1870 the presence of such a force sufficed to inspire the neighbors of Belgium with respect. After the death of the first

king, the military machine got a little rusty, and in 1870 the paper strength of 97,000 men on a war footing produced only 85,000 in reality. Some increase of numbers, especially in artillery and engineers, was sanctioned, and in 1880 the paper strength had been raised to 109,000 men, which it was hoped would give 100,000 efficient. But owing to the enormous increase in the armies of France and Germany, where standing armies had been abandoned for "armed nations," the Belgian army of 100,000 men had become by the course of events relatively valueless as compared with those of its neighbors.

The Belgians themselves were fully conscious of the change, and gradually created a small reserve which raised the total paper strength on a war footing to 163,750 in 1900. In 1904 the total was brought up to 171,508. The peace effective, however, was in the latter year less by 3,500 men than it had been in 1870, and many of the battalions on parade were described as skeletons. If exception were made for the fortress artillery, the Belgian army in 1904 would have been pronounced far weaker and less efficient than it had been thirty-four years before, while the armies of its two principal neighbors had increased nearly tenfold.

The demand for army reform and an increased contingent had been going on all the time in the country, and several War Ministers had resigned because the Government would not support their proposals. One reform was loudly called for before every other



because it was aimed at a vicious principle. The military law of the land was conscription, that is to say, the annual contingent was obtained by the drawing of lots by all young men on reaching the age of nineteen. But when a well-to-do conscript drew what was called a bad number, he merely paid a sum of about \$340, and a substitute was provided by the State. This was the much-canvassed and unpopular right of pre-emption. The consequence was that only the poor and needy class served in the army. It was not until 1909 that this privilege was abolished, and henceforth all classes alike will have to pay what is called the blood tax. The effect of this change will only be perceptible after a few more years of trial and reorganization.

The new army is to have a fixed peace strength of 42,800 men, exclusive of officers, who in 1904 numbered 3,473. The strength on a war footing is to be gradually raised to 188,000. The real change of importance is that the 145,200 men called to the colors will be fully trained soldiers and young, whereas the old reserve consisted to a large extent of middle-aged men, married and loth to leave their homes. The term of service with the colors has also been reduced as much as possible with regard to the speedy attainment of the minimum total felt to be necessary by the Government for the defense of Belgium. For the different branches of the service it is fixed as follows:

Infantry, Fortress Artillery, specialized companies of Artillery, Engineers and specialized companies of Engineers.....	15 months
Cavalry and Horse Artillery.....	2 years
Field Artillery and Train.....	21 months
Administrative Battalion .....	12½ months

As soon as the total required has been obtained, it is proposed to reduce the term by one-third in the case of all conscripts who have shown their capability by qualifying for the rank of corporal or brigadier.

3. The infantry is divided into nineteen regiments in all, named as follows: One regiment of Grenadiers, one regiment of Carabiniers, three regiments of Foot Chasseurs, and fourteen Line regiments distinguished by their numbers. All these regiments have three active and two reserve battalions each, with the exception of the Carabiniers which has four active and three reserve battalions. The Belgian infantry is consequently represented by fifty-eight active and thirty-nine reserve battalions. The defect of this distribution is that the fifty-eight active battalions average less than 400 men apiece. There are 2,000 officers serving with the battalions, which is a strong proportion.

Of cavalry there are only eight regiments. They are two of Guides, two of Horse Chasseurs and four of Lancers. Each regiment on the peace establishment numbers about forty officers and 400 men; but it is not easy to follow how the total strength of the cavalry, which on mobilization will number 9,600 men, is to be distributed among only eight regiments. The two Guides regiments are always quartered in Brus-

sels, and somewhat resemble our household cavalry, their officers being to a large extent members of the noble families of the Netherlands. They are, however, light and not heavy cavalry, and their uniform—cherry trousers, green jackets and busbies—although exceedingly pretty, is not imposing in the sense that those of our Life Guards, the former Imperial Cent Gardes and the German Garde du Corps are or were. The undress green kepi of the officers is even more becoming than the busby.

The Lancer and Chasseur regiments also wear attractive uniforms, the Lancers wearing the old Polish lancer headdress and the Chasseurs a high kepi of black water-proof leather. The regiments are all well mounted, but whether there is a sufficiency of horses available for the demand on mobilization is not known. Although the material is excellent, there is reason to doubt whether the training of the cavalry is adequate for the exigencies of modern warfare. There is a dearth of suitable training grounds for cavalry. The riding-school at Ypres is formed on the model of the French similar school at Saumur, but it is admitted to stand in need of reorganization. It must be recognized that a great deal more attention has been paid by Belgian officers to riding of late years than was formerly the case.

Belgium possesses a very fine corps of heavy cavalry in the gendarmerie. This force has been gradually increased in strength. In 1870 it consisted of

forty-five officers and 1,442 men; in 1904 it numbered sixty-seven officers and 3,079 men. The force is distributed throughout the kingdom and divided into three divisions. It patrols the high roads, is employed in arresting malefactors, and keeps a watch on smugglers and spies. These duties make it more of a police than a military force. But it has military functions as well. On State occasions a few gendarmes are always on show in their full dress uniform of doeskin riding-breeches, jack-boots, blue tunics and bearskins, which make them resemble our Scots Greys or the old French Grenadiers à Cheval. As they are men picked for their physique from the army, they are quite a *corps d'élite*, and in the event of invasion they would bear the first shock. They are also specially charged with the execution of the order of mobilization.

In 1899, during the worst phase of the Socialist riots, the Division of Brabant, Hainaut, and Namur was concentrated in Brussels, and took a very active part in putting down the street disturbances. In fact, the Socialists for the first time had some experience of rough handling, and with them the gendarmes became very unpopular. They called them the Pandours, but none the less they had received a salutary lesson, to which M. Vandervelde, the Socialist leader, gave point by remarking that their revolvers did not place them on an equality with men armed with Mausers. This corps is also exceedingly well mounted, and the

horses are kept in rather harder condition than with the regular cavalry regiments.

✓ The Artillery has always been well organized in Belgium, more especially that branch of it which is designated Siege or Fortress. There are seventy batteries of this class on a peace footing. Its training ground is at Braschaet, near Antwerp, where there is a polygon for testing the newest kinds of heavy ordnance. Within the last ten years the artillery in the forts of Antwerp, Liège, and Namur has been completely renovated, and is now quite up-to-date. The field artillery consists of thirty batteries on a peace footing, but there are only four batteries of Horse Artillery. All these batteries have been armed with a new quick-firing gun. In thirty-four years the strength of the personnel of the artillery has more than doubled. In 1870 it numbered 380 officers and 13,062 men on a war footing; in 1904 the corresponding totals were 565 officers and 29,798 men.

The total of the Engineer force is 163 officers and 1,484 men on the peace establishment and 6,808 on mobilization. The "other corps" number 670 officers and 2,068 men on the peace establishment, which are increased to 11,538, when the reserves are called out. Among these are included the officers of the Head-Quarter Staff, the military train, the administrative staff, and the military schools in which young men are being trained either as officers or as non-commissioned officers.

7. Now that the reform of the Belgian army has been taken seriously in hand a marked improvement may be expected in its appearance and real efficiency. With regard to the physique of the men, there should soon be a noticeable change, more especially as gymnastics on the Swedish system have recently been introduced into the army. For many years the Belgian officers have labored for the improvement of the army under very discouraging conditions. Many Belgian politicians used to declare that the country required nothing more than a police force, and even those who did not go quite so far as this were persuaded that the Garde Civique supplied an adequate reserve for the regular army. It is now generally admitted by most Belgians that an efficient army is essential for the preservation of their national independence.

No mention having been made of the Garde Civique, it may be stated that this civic force came into being at the time of the Belgian Revolution, and the rôle assigned to it was the maintenance of order in the towns. It was also intended that it should co-operate with the regular troops in their defense in the event of hostile attack or invasion. After the war with Holland was over the Garde Civique fell into neglect, and although over 38,000 men were on the rolls in 1892 they were found to be of little use during the serious Socialist troubles and strikes of that period. One of the consequences of those incidents

was that the authorities took up the serious reform of the Garde Civique. All citizen householders were enrolled and required to attend a weekly muster held on Sundays. They were also supplied with Mauser rifles, and in 1905 there were 35,700 more or less well-trained men available to support the civil power in any emergency. Besides the Garde Civique, but closely akin to it are the Volunteers. These are corps that have possessed a distinct existence from an older date, and include a considerable proportion of cavalry and artillery, whereas the Garde Civique is composed of infantry alone. The Volunteers consist of 2,466 artillery, 668 cavalry, 4,809 infantry or foot chasseurs, and 599 fire brigade, making a total of 8,542. The total of the combined corps exceeds 44,000 strong. It is scarcely necessary to say that service in one of the volunteer corps exempts from liability for the ordinary Guard Civique. Since this force was finally reorganized in 1899 there have been fewer street demonstrations, and no repetition of the serious riots of that year when for a few days Brussels seemed to be passing through a revolution.

Although the Belgian army has not got a very extensive war record, there is no reason to doubt that under anything like fair conditions it would give a very good account of itself against any opponent. The old fiction that the Belgians ran away at Waterloo has been exploded. In the war with the Dutch in 1830-31 the Belgians did exceedingly well, and if the

ten days' campaign in August, 1831, was unfortunate, the conditions under which it was carried on almost precluded success. Since that period Belgian troops have not fought on their own soil. But they furnished contingents for the war in Portugal and the expedition to Mexico, and in both they served with credit. Their best opportunity has been found in Central Africa, but here it must be stated that no Belgian troops ever fought in a body. The conquest of the Congo State and the protracted campaign for the destruction of the Arab slave dealers' power were carried out by Belgian and other officers leading black troops. The courage and constancy of these men, of whom the late Baron Dhanis was the chief, gave a favorable impression of the army to which they belonged.

◁ In conclusion, a brief description may be given of the system of fortifications on which the defense of Belgium may be said to be based. After Waterloo, Belgium was endowed with twenty-four fortresses, all intended to protect the country against French invasion. They were built in accordance with the best principles of the day under the personal supervision of Wellington, and the French taxpayer had the dubious privilege of paying the cost of this barrier against his country. Those were the days when every one was mortally afraid of French aggression. One little consideration had been overlooked. How was Belgium to provide troops to garrison all of them in time of peace? The plan of defense was really an



absurd anachronism, and Leopold I exposed its defects. In 1832 the number was reduced by five, after negotiations that threatened to produce a European war. In 1858 the nineteen others remained in existence. In that year the Belgian Government took up the question for itself in connection with the fortification of Antwerp. The nineteen were then reduced to five, and all the useless second- or third-rate fortresses along the French frontier were suppressed and dismantled. The five that were preserved were Antwerp, Namur, Liège, Diest, and Termonde. The only one of these to be improved was Antwerp, where a new *enceinte* and eight detached forts were constructed; the others remained exactly as they had been in the time of the Dutch régime.

After the great war of 1870 an immense and far-reaching change took place in the range and destructive power of siege artillery. All the Belgian fortresses, including even the fine new works at Antwerp, were rendered useless. In 1886 the question was pressed home to the conscience of the Belgian people by the efforts of General Brialmont, who had just made a great reputation by his elaborate scheme of fortification at Bucharest. The Belgian Chambers were induced to vote the necessary funds for the modernizing of the fortress of Antwerp, and for the erection of new positions or *têtes de pont* at Liège and Namur, thus further reducing the total of Belgian fortresses to three. At Namur the old citadel, famous

for its sieges in the time of Louis XIV, was abandoned, and a ring of nine new forts at distances of four or five miles from the town was substituted. These forts are cupola-shaped and bomb-proof. The guns in them are raised and lowered automatically, and have a range of ten miles or even more. At Liège there are twelve new forts; two of the strongest of them at Fléron and Chaudfontaine command the railway and road from Germany. There is no doubt that the Namur and Liège positions are exceedingly strong, but both require larger garrisons than is generally assumed for the defense of the intervals. For instance, the fort of Evegnée, at Liège, was captured in theory during some recent Belgian manœuvres, and the loss of one of the detached forts would seriously compromise the security of the others.

\ The question of the fortifications at these places is of such great importance that it may be useful to give fuller particulars as to the detached forts. Of the twelve forts at Liège six are on the right bank of the Meuse and six on the left. The interval between each of them averages two and a half miles, and the total of the circumference is thirty-one miles. The six forts on the right bank of the Meuse are in their order from north to south (forming an eastern curve), Barchon, Evegnée, Fléron, Chaudfontaine, Embourg, and Boncelles. Fléron and Chaudfontaine command the main railway line from Germany. The six forts on the left bank, taking the western curve, are Pon-

tisse, Liers, Lantin, Loncin, Hollogne, and Flemalle. The whole constitutes a position which, if held by a sufficient garrison, would be very difficult to capture. The Meuse, which is unbridged at this point, constitutes an element of weakness for both Pontisse and Barchon.

The nine forts round Namur are St. Heribert, Malonne, Suarlée, Emince, Cognelée, Gelbressée, Maizeret, Andoy, and Dave. They are placed at an average interval of two and a half miles, and the perimeter in this case is twenty-one miles. The twenty-one forts together cost four millions sterling.

While the work to be done at Namur and Liège was brought to completion, that at Antwerp, the assumed place of final stand for Belgian liberty, was left half finished. A second outer ring of fifteen detached forts was to have been provided, but after five had been constructed, all the money was gone and work was suspended. In 1900 two of the missing ten were completed, and at last in 1907, in consequence of the serious international outlook, the completion of the fortification of Antwerp was taken in hand and has now been brought to completion. Part of the scheme, which was received with mixed feelings when it was first broached, is the demolition of the fine *enceinte* constructed in 1859. This was done to admit of the freer expansion of the city, but some lighter and less costly protection will have to be provided

against attack by cavalry and horse artillery or otherwise the security of Antwerp will be compromised.

The important point in all these changes is that the number of places to be defended by the Belgian army has been brought well within the capacity of its numerical strength. It is even estimated that with 180,000 effective troops Belgium will be able to place an army of 100,000 men in the field to co-operate with the armies of her friends.

At Beverloo, not far from Hasselt, in the north-east corner of Belgium, there is a military camp somewhat resembling Aldershot, where the infantry regiments are sent in rotation during the summer and autumn to perfect their drill. In most years also autumn manœuvres are held, and, as a rule, the valley of the Meuse between Namur and Liège is chosen for their scene. The most instructive lessons derived from these experiments are those that relate to the defense of the intervals between the detached forts guarding the important crossing places over the Meuse at Liège and Namur. It is also noticeable that no attempt has been made to defend the approach from Dalheim. The late General Brialmont always considered that to perfect the positions of Liège and Namur a *fort d'arrêt* was required at St. Trond. If he were living now, he would probably stipulate for one at Diest as well.

## CHAPTER X

### POPULATION AND SOCIAL MATTERS

THE official returns for the year 1908 gave Belgium a population of 7,386,444 persons. In 1831 the same extent of territory had 3,785,814 inhabitants. In seventy-seven years the population has increased by 3,600,630, or in other words, nearly doubled. In the same period there has been a large migration of Belgians into the neighboring countries, notably into France, and it does not seem an exaggeration to say that half a million Belgians reside out of their own country. Indeed, some authorities think that these returns are very incomplete, and that there are more than that number of Belgians in France alone.

As Belgium contains 29,445 square kilometers, the density of population in 1908 was 250.9 to the square kilometer, or 649.5 to the square mile. This density is only exceeded in Saxony, a kingdom half its size. The following table shows the population at the end of the years stated:

POPULATION IN YEARS NAMED				
1831	1846	1856	1866	1876
3,785,814	4,337,196	4,529,560	4,827,833	5,336,185
1880	1890	1900	1908	
5,520,009	6,069,321	6,693,548	7,386,444	

Dividing the population among the Nine Provinces, the following are the returns for each of them in 1908:

Antwerp .....	559,218
Brabant .....	1,454,363
Hainaut .....	1,229,103
East Flanders.....	1,111,001
West Flanders.....	871,636
Liège .....	894,938
Limburg .....	269,442
Luxemburg .....	232,254
Namur .....	364,489
Total .....	<u>7,386,444</u>

The average annual increase in the population during the last forty years has been one per cent. The increases in the three decennial periods that follow were:

1866-76.....	10.53 per cent
1880-90.....	9.95 per cent
1890-1900.....	10.28 per cent

The increase for the eight years alone from 1900 to 1908 has been at the rate of 10.35, and by the end of 1910 it seemed likely to reach 12, which would place Belgium as a growing country on a level with Germany and Italy. The increase in population varies in the different provinces. It has been greatest in Antwerp, which increased by 17 per cent between 1890 and 1900, and in Brabant, where the increase was 14.23. Between 1846 and 1900 the population of Antwerp doubled, whereas for the whole kingdom the increase was only 54 per cent. Among the towns, Ostend, Antwerp, and Brussels in their order show the largest increases. In 1856 and again in 1866 there

were more men than women in Belgium. In 1908 there were nearly 50,000 more women.

	1856	1866	1908
Men .....	2,271,783	2,419,639	3,669,022
Women .....	2,257,777	2,408,194	3,717,422

With regard to the Belgians living in foreign countries, the following are the totals given for the seven most important countries. They are the latest returns available in all cases, but they do not relate to the same year:

Belgians by birth resident in

France .....	395,498
Holland .....	14,950
Germany .....	12,421
Great Britain and Ireland.....	4,588
Grand Duchy, the.....	3,891
United States, the.....	29,848
Argentina .....	5,634

The population of the cities and towns with over 100,000 inhabitants was as follows (1908):

Brussels and its eight communes.....	637,807
Antwerp .....	391,600
Liège 175,870; with Seraing.....	218,508
Ghent .....	163,763

Bruges had 53,897 as against 48,673 in 1856, a very small increase, but Courtrai had 34,977 as against 22,216. In the same period Ostend rose from 16,118 to 42,606 (out of the season). Among the historical places the following may be named:

Town	Population in 1856	Population in 1908
Louvain .....	30,765	42,001
Malines .....	31,371	59,218

Mons .....	26,061.....	27,349
Tournai .....	30,824.....	37,640
Charleroi .....	10,702.....	27,415
Namur .....	24,716.....	32,047
Ypres .....	16,698.....	17,542
Verviers .....	27,115.....	48,583

The increase in the urban population has only been remarkable in a few places. At Mons and Ypres it has been infinitesimal.

4- Considering the growth of the Belgian population, it is curious to note that it has been due not so much to an extraordinarily high birth rate as to a low death rate. In 1908 there were 24.89 births per thousand of the population, but in Germany the ratio was 32; France, 20.2; England, 26.5; Scotland, 27.2; Italy, 33.6; Holland, 29.7; Austria, 34.5; Hungary, 36.3; and Russia, 48.1. The total births in the year named were 183,834, and the total deaths were 121,964. The death rate was as low as 16.51 per thousand. For purposes of comparison the rates in the other countries named in the same order were: Germany, 18; France, 19; England, 14.7; Scotland, 16.1; Italy, 22.2; Holland, 15; Austria, 22.4; Hungary, 26.3; and Russia, 30. In Belgium the male deaths are 52 per cent and the female 48 of the grand total.

The number of marriages rose from 26,484 in 1830 to 57,564 in 1908. The proportion in the former year was 6.50 per thousand inhabitants and in the latter 7.79. The highest proportion reached was 8.70. This occurred in the year 1901. The total for the



year 1908 showed for the first time a slight diminution as compared with the previous year, when the number was 58,660.

The number of illegitimate children is decreasing, and of those subsequently legitimized increasing. In 1880 there was one illegitimate birth to 12.89 legitimate; in 1908 one illegitimate to 15.23 legitimate. There was an average annual increase of 29 per cent in the number legitimized for the period 1891-1900 as compared with 1881-90. On the other hand, divorce and suicide showed a marked increase. In 1840 there was only one divorce to 1,175 marriages, and in 1865 one in 739, but in 1908 the ratio had risen to one in 65. It is only right to say that the increase has occurred chiefly in Brussels, Antwerp, and Liège. In the two Flanders there does not appear to be any increase at all. So also with suicides. In 1880 there were 441 suicides, an average of one per 12,146 of the population. In 1908 there were 970 suicides, or one per 7,616 of the inhabitants.

// Since the year 1867 the total number of immigrants has for every ten years exceeded that of emigrants; since 1890 this has been true of every year without exception. Although there has been a notable diminution in the emigration figures, the majority still go to France—54 per cent of a total emigration of 32,294 souls in 1908. The immigrants in that year numbered 38,155, of whom 16,984, or 44 per cent, came from France.

The decline in the comparative total of emigrants must be attributed to the high state of prosperity in Belgium as much as to the stay-at-home sentiments of the Belgian peoples. The Walloons rarely emigrate with the fixed intention of not returning. The bulk of Walloon emigrants are those who are attracted by the high wages offered them at Gladbach and other German manufacturing towns, and they always return sooner or later. The Flemings are more adventurous, and in both Flanders the emigrants still exceed the immigrants.

In the twenty-five years ending in 1908 the number of lunatics almost doubled as compared with an increase of 33 per cent in the population. The totals in 1833 were 4,454 men and 4,309 women (total, 8,763), and in 1908, 8,975 men and 7,959 women (total, 16,934).

Since 1890 great ameliorations have been effected in the status of the working man. In that year there were only 373 mutual societies for his relief in illness and accident, or for the benefit of his dependents after death. In 1908 the number recognized by the State had increased to 7,945. The number of members rose from 227,581 in 1900 to 605,670 in 1908, and their contributions from \$580,052.20 in the previous year to \$1,748,749.60 in the latter. The majority of these societies are affiliated to the State Savings Bank.

In 1892 new regulations were made for the provision of improved workmen's dwellings with State aid. Under them advances are made on the recommendation of the societies for the purchase or building of sanitary houses for the working classes. These become the occupiers' property on a sliding scale of repayment combined with life insurance. In 1908 \$20,000,000 were advanced in one form or other by the Savings Bank for the amelioration of the homes of the working classes, or for the benefit of the pension and death funds of the societies.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE COURT AND SOCIETY

THE Court of Belgium, although it was created under what might almost be called popular influences, has established as severe an etiquette as exists at larger and older courts with historical associations and an inherited ceremonial. This tendency was certainly increased under the influence of the two successive queens, Marie Louise of the House of Orleans, and Marie Henriette of that of Hapsburg. The first King was a great upholder of the monarchical dignity, and, during a long period of his reign, showed it by keeping himself in a state of seclusion from his Ministers. He was never easily accessible to any one. Such a charge cannot be brought against his son, King Leopold, who was sometimes accused of being too easily accessible, because he wished to see men with his own eyes, and to judge them and the public questions with which they were connected for himself. But, notwithstanding this personal condescension, the regulation of Court ceremonial was just as strict under the Second Leopold as under the First. The policy of the new King and Queen so

far seems to be a happy medium between too much aloofness and too much familiarity.

The seat of the Belgian Court is the Palace of Brussels, facing the park, at the opposite extremity of which stands the *Palais de la Nation* and some of the Government offices. Between the Palace of the King and the Palace of the Nation stretches the park which once formed the private grounds of the Palace of the Netherlands, and which was the scene of the fighting in 1830. That famous royal residence which witnessed the abdication of Charles V was burnt down in 1731, and its more modest successor was erected by the Archduchess Marie Christine in 1782. It served as the royal residence under the Dutch King William I and the two Belgian Leopolds. No attempt to change its external appearance was made till towards the close of the reign of Leopold II. The State rooms were fine, but the façade was poor, and gave a rather mean appearance to the whole. At the end, too, was the Bellevue Hotel, which was held under a lease dating from the time of the Empress Maria Theresa. A private hotel did not add to the dignity of the palace to which it was attached, but at least it was kept in good repair and looked better than the old Hotel d'Assche at the eastern extremity, which was used as the office of the Civil List.

About the year 1903 it was decided to embellish the Palace by giving it a new front, and as a beginning the Bellevue Hotel was acquired. Belgian opin-

ion is very sensitive in matters of personal association. The Bellevue Hotel had played a part in the revolution of 1830. From its roof a Belgian sportsman had shot twenty-one Dutch grenadiers, and a protest was raised that even for a new palace front this historic landmark should not be removed. This was not the only protest of the kind. The new façade which was to be protected by a railed terrace, encroached to such an extent on the *parvis* or open square in front of the palace that it was found necessary to cut off a strip of the park. This caused much commotion, not because it diminished the extent of a public park, but because it threatened the existence of the historic pits in which the Dutch buried their slain in September, 1830. Assurances had to be given on both these points before the work could be taken in hand. The Bellevue Hotel was to be embellished, but left intact in its main aspect, and the pits were not to be filled in. Public opinion was thus conciliated with regard to the changes necessitated by the new Palace.

It must be admitted that the new Palace is a very great improvement on the old. It has quite an imposing front in Belgian stone with a fine dome crowning the center. At either extremity is a columned terrace or belvedere gallery. The public is also excluded from the walk passing under the palace windows, and kept at a more respectful distance by an enclosed terraced garden. All State dinners and re-

ceptions are given in this palace, and no doubt the new King and Queen, being young, will entertain much more than their predecessors. Notwithstanding the improvements effected at this Palace and the increased accommodation furnished by the addition of another story, Brussels is never likely to supplant Laeken as the residence and home of the Belgian royal family.

Before passing on, it may be mentioned that the Bellevue Hotel has been converted into a private residence for the Princess Clémentine, youngest daughter of Leopold II, who is now married to Prince Napoleon, the head of his family. Some of these days it seems safe to assume that both it and the Hotel d'Assche, which has also been left intact, will be incorporated in the Palace to which they are attached.

Laeken, which lives in history as the place from which Napoleon wrote his order for the Russian expedition, is situated on the northern side of the city, at a distance of about four miles from the Park. The old château was burnt down in 1889, but it was promptly rebuilt on the old lines, and largely added to by the late King between 1903 and 1907. It was the favorite residence of both the Leopolds, and is famous for its orangery (part of the original building), its gardens and conservatories. A costly Chinese pagoda and a pavilion were among the embellishments added by Leopold II. At Laeken the sover-

eigns have been accustomed to give the garden parties which closed the Court season, and no doubt this practice, which was discontinued after the death of Queen Marie Henriette, will be resumed by the new King and Queen. Although not without a certain stateliness in its ceremonial, the Belgian Court has never been a very gay one, various circumstances of more or less public notoriety having overshadowed its life. The Belgian monarchy being of modern creation and founded under what are known as popular conditions, there is not much scope for its attaining the brilliance of older Courts, but at least it may be made brighter and more in evidence than has been the case for the past forty years.

In Belgium, the society that would be deemed eligible for attendance at Court is divided into three principal sections—the nobility, the official world, and the most prominent individuals among the moneyed, literary, and artistic classes. The members of the Legislature have a right, subject to the Sovereign's pleasure and convenience, to be received at the Palace by the Sovereign on New Year's Day, but sometimes this ceremony has been omitted. They have no right to attend the regular Court receptions in their character of legislators, and if any of them are invited, it is because they possess what are held to be the suitable qualifications.

With regard to the nobility, it is extremely exclusive, and not very numerous if it be counted by the



separate families. The Belgian *livre d'or* is supposed to, and practically does, take no note of titles created since 1830. The noble class may be subdivided among the holders of titles of the Holy Roman Empire (that is to say, prior to the cessation of Austrian rule in 1794), a few of the Emperor Napoleon's creation, and a slightly larger number of creations by the Dutch King William I between 1815 and 1830. The Belgian kings since 1831 have the right to confer the titles of count and baron (provided the decree is countersigned by a Minister), but it has been very sparingly used. As a rule, the recipients have well deserved the honor, but its conference does not secure admission within the charmed circle of the *classe noble*.

There are a few historic families among the noble class of the southern Netherlands, such as the De Lignes, the D'Arenbergs (now also Le Lignes), the Croys (pronounced Crō-ēes), the Chimays, de Mérodes, de Lalaings, de Lannoys, D'Assches, D'Ur-sels, and D'Oultremonts. Members of these families have played their part in history since the time of the Crusades, and some of them are better known in Vienna or Berlin than in Brussels. In any case, they occupy a place quite apart, and are entirely independent of all Court favor. Their indifference to the sovereign's favor is a curious feature in Belgian social life, not perhaps to be paralleled elsewhere. Leopold I once expressed the opinion however, that "What we

have of the old nobility is very patriotic." Below these nine or ten families come perhaps thirty more, whose names would be practically unknown to the English reader, although they possess the full privileges of the golden book. Then we have the few French or Dutch creations, and that constitutes the highest circle in Belgian society.

It is not very easy to describe it as a wealthy aristocracy or the reverse, but great landed estates are rare, and the resources accumulated in the last century are due to strict economy and careful husbanding. A safe description would be to describe it as comfortably off, and free from ostentation. The nobility are not at all given to extensive entertaining among themselves, and the principal entertainments are held in common at a Nobles' Club, which gives three or four balls during the season. The code of the aristocracy has been rigid on the point that its members must not take up with commerce, trade, or finance, and formerly even the official service was taboo. Owing, no doubt, to the increase of numbers, the latter point has been waived and an increasing number of cadets find their way into the chief Government departments. Until this change came into operation, the army and the church offered the only available professions. The officers of the two Guides regiments come mainly from this class and latterly there has been a tendency to join the Lancer regiments and even the Grenadiers.

With regard to the purely official world it has always enjoyed a favored position in Belgium. The Palace has ever looked with a friendly eye on the bureaucrats as a sort of buffer against the politicians. The new titles have been principally granted among permanent officials. All officials above the junior grades in the five principal ministries, viz., Foreign Affairs, War, Finance, Interior, and Public Works, could rely on an invitation to Court functions provided they wished it, and at least they would be present at the annual reception of the Civil Service which followed upon that of the legislature. In the social life of Brussels the heads of departments, usually called General Secretaries, are received everywhere, because all the world likes to get official information, even when it is a thin dilution of truth, or specially made up to mislead. The noble class has been averse to replenish or strengthen the public service, but it receives as a welcome and honored guest the official who has the time and inclination to pass through their salons. Prominent among such officials was the late Baron Lambermont, long the permanent secretary at the Foreign Office.

∴ We now come to the third class in the composition of Court life, the magnates of finance, and the leaders of the literary and art worlds. The first-named were the last to gain admission, but they are now the most prominent of all. *La haute finance* (high finance, as we call it) has a firm foothold in Brussels, and has

sapped the old exclusive position of the noblesse. The Quartier Léopold is moving with the times. The Jewish colony is one of the most important even in that exclusive faubourg, and it dispenses a hospitality not to be met with among any other set in Belgium. Next to the financier, who is with some rare exceptions a Jew, come the great industrials who have risen to prominence with the development of Antwerp and Liège, Ghent and Brussels. These men are chiefly Belgians, the Jews only coming into prominence in the world of pure finance; the old laws of Belgium, curiously enough, provided that money matters should be the concern of Jews and Lombards alone. In this section of Belgian society, also, a more cosmopolitan and less exclusive manner is observable.

Fifty years ago literary and artistic merit filled a larger place in the estimation of the temporal powers of Belgium than it has now done for some time past. In the days of Henri Conscience and Lavelaye (who had other qualifications) letters were a surer passport to the throne-room at the Palace than great wealth. Nowadays it is different. Perhaps it is due to the circumstance that literature in Belgium furnishes a very poor career, or it may be that there are no literary giants today. Writers, pamphleteers, and pressmen took the most prominent part in organizing the revolution of 1830, the revolution itself was followed by a great literary revival, and a galaxy of literary talent ornamented the reign of Leopold I. But the

times have become more materialistic in Belgium. Literature is slighted if it has not lost caste. There are no longer the same men. The writers who appear now at Court are there for some other reason. They are priests or judges, or at the least one of the popular instructors called conferenciers. The same observation applies to art. The bureaucratic and moneyed classes have ousted the purely intellectual, and so far as can be seen there is no likelihood of the balance being readjusted. The noticeable defect in Belgian life is that the ideal and purely intellectual has been swamped and driven out by the materialistic tendencies of a mainly industrial and strictly money-making state of society.

With regard to the official world, apart from its relations with the Court, there is every reason to believe that it is thoroughly efficient, fully capable of dealing with the matters that come before it in the course of duty, and free of all suspicion of being amenable to bribery. This is the more creditable because the salaries and rewards are framed on a low scale, the active service is for a much longer period of life than with us, and the conditions of the pension list are somewhat vigorous and elusive. The inducements to retire are so few that men remain on the active list to the very last possible moment, and there is no civil service in Europe with such a large proportion of old men in the higher ranks. Under new regulations that are adopted in principle, if not yet

applied in practice, there will be compulsory retirement at the age of seventy. These observations apply, of course, only to the staff of the great Departments of State and not to the minor posts filled by employees of the Government throughout the country, such as railway clerks and tax collectors.

## CHAPTER XII

### BURGHER LIFE IN BRUSSELS

18 THE typical life of the Belgian people is perhaps to be found best revealed in the household of the Brussels citizen. Leaving aside the very small stratum of what may be called Society, the mode of life among the great body of citizens, above the working classes, is very much the same, notwithstanding the differences of income, occupation, and education. Whether the head of the household be a lawyer or a trader, a manufacturer or a shopkeeper, who is well enough off to live away from his shop, there is less class difference, so far as the daily routine of life goes, than would be found in any other European community—in fact, middle-class life in Belgium very much resembles that of America. The explanation is that at heart the Belgians are a simple people, whose chief characteristic, strengthened by hard experience for many years, is thrift. There is a complete absence of all ostentatious display. It would be as impossible to estimate a man's income from the exterior of his house as it would be to assign his profession or business from his appearance in the street. This appearance of equality is very largely due to the two not disconnected facts, that the first

object with every Brussels citizen is to become proprietor of his own house and that the houses of Brussels are built very much after the same pattern. This, of course, does not apply to the fashionable boulevards or the Avenue Louise, but in all the by-streets and suburbs now spreading out in every direction, houses are being run up, lofty and narrow, all seemingly fashioned by the same architect. The Belgians have an aversion to being mere tenants, regarding the payment of rent as so much loss of money; and a house or the money to purchase one, is considered the best kind of a *dot* that a young woman can bring to her husband. The price of a house containing seven rooms, besides kitchen, runs from \$5,000 in the fashionable suburbs like St. Giles, to \$2,500 in the outer suburbs like Etterbeck. There is, in addition, a tax of ten per cent payable to the commune, with a share to the State, on the conclusion of the purchase. Having paid the price, the proprietor is practically relieved from all annual payments for the taxes to the commune are exceedingly low, and do not amount to more than six per cent on the estimated rent, which is about one-eleventh of the purchase sum. Ten per cent will pay the commune, the supply water, and that of gas as well, and for this reason Brussels has been called the paradise of the small householder. There is no doubt that the free possession of a house lies at the root of the Belgian citizen's comfort, and explains how, with a very small



income, he can occupy a decent house which externally does not differ materially from one the occupant of which may have ten times his income.

It is only on entering these houses that some idea can be formed of the status of the occupant. Among those families whose income is not in proportion to the exterior of their residence, the interior will reveal the fact by its bareness and absence of decoration, whereas those who are comfortably well off will spend large sums on painting and gilding. The Belgians are noted for their good taste in the way they decorate the inside of their houses, and as the house is really theirs, they do not mind spending very considerable sums in this way. It is the same with the furniture, which is always as good as the owner can afford in the reception rooms. Every Belgian house has what may be called its show-rooms, and their contents will give the clue at once to the degree of prosperity the family has attained. There may be \$5,000 worth of furniture and *objets d'art* in the room, or there may be only \$50 worth. In either case it is the best that the owner can show.

There is one thing that these rooms have in common, no matter what the position of the occupant, and that is the air of being rarely used. It is more like the model room into which the furniture merchant invites his customer for the purpose of deciding the style in which he proposes to furnish, than an actual living-room. The Belgian's first investment is to buy

his house, and his second is to lay in a stock of furniture. As both are intended not merely to last a lifetime, but to be handed down in the family, the most scrupulous care is taken in selecting every article. A shade of anxiety may be traced on the worthy owner's face if a visitor moves in a chair or brushes past a table. Sometimes these good people let off a floor, often to English visitors, with the view of saving something for a holiday, or through some needed economy; and if the rooms are well-furnished, the urgent request is made not to spoil the furniture (*'il ne faut pas abîmer les meubles'*). I knew of a case where the iteration of this injunction became so irksome that the English tenants left twenty-four hours after the entry, because they were afraid to sit on the chairs.

Into the regular living-rooms no stranger is allowed to penetrate, but the casual opportunities afforded during long residence in the country enables one to see that they are very bare and plain. As a rule, the dining-room is in close proximity to the kitchen, so that the necessary domestic service is reduced to a minimum. There is, of course, in most houses a dining-room upstairs, but this is only used on the very rare occasions when an entertainment of some sort is given. The Belgians are not prone to the display of much hospitality among themselves. They do not dine often at one another's houses. The members of the same family meet occasionally, but, as a

rule, their dinners in common are to celebrate some family event, such as a marriage, or an engagement, or a first communion. The case is practically unknown of taking a friend home to have "pot-luck." To do so would seriously disconcert the lady of the house, who is probably in *négligé* until she goes for her afternoon promenade.

The life of the house, like the life of the whole country, begins at an early hour. By eight o'clock probably every family in Brussels will have finished their breakfast, and if they are near the markets in the lower town or in the communes, each of which has its market, they will have purchased their provisions as well. This early rising is indispensable, as all the offices, and in fact the whole business of the city, commence work at nine punctually. This means that the person engaged must leave his house between eight and half-past eight, in accordance with the distance he has to travel; but as there are electric trams now in all directions, the journey, from even the outer suburbs, can generally be accomplished with much rapidity. The Belgians take only a light breakfast, which is almost universally *café au lait*, rolls and butter; but of late years the doctors have been recommending a more substantial meal after the English fashion. Those who are not too pressed in the morning by their occupations are now adding to their breakfast one or two dishes, but such luxuries, as they

are called, are taken by but a very small number of persons.

2 6 The offices close at twelve, and all business is stopped at that hour for the purpose of dining. The men who have rushed off in the morning to be at their posts in good time, rush back to their houses at a still greater speed to enjoy the chief meal of the day. By this time the stimulating effect of the morning coffee has long worn off, and the bread-winners are simply faint and famishing. It is perilous to protract an interview with a Belgian official when the clock hand points to ten minutes to twelve. Politeness will scarcely prevent his displaying the anxiety and displeasure with which he begins to apprehend that some minutes of his cherished two hours are going to be poached from him. The best business in the country is done before eleven o'clock in the morning. After that hour it is no exaggeration to say that the needs of exhausted nature begin to assert themselves.

The midday meal, which commences, as a general rule, at half-past twelve, is the most substantial of the whole day. It is always a hot repast and always opens with soup. The Belgians are hearty, not to say great, eaters, and it takes a good hour to allay their hunger. The general drink is beer—wine is drunk rarely and sparingly—and a cup of black coffee is taken at the end as a digestive rather than as a stimulant, and then the journey is made back to the

office or business, which resumes work at two o'clock. The work of the afternoon is done more leisurely than that of the morning, and chiefly consists of the correspondence resulting out of the transactions of the morning. The offices work late, always till six, and often till seven or after. Then the more or less weary toiler returns home to his supper, which is a simple meal, probably the remains of the dinner, assisted with something purchased on the way back from a *charcutier*. Having to get up so early, the Brussels citizen always goes to bed in good time. Very soon after nine o'clock all the lights are out in the ordinary household five nights out of seven. The Belgian is not a reader; the morning and evening newspapers satisfy all his wants in that direction; hence there is nothing to keep him from his well-earned repose.

The life *au restaurant* is a far less marked feature in Brussels than in Paris. It is rather expensive, even at the cheapest restaurants, and the family man will only indulge in it occasionally. Those whose work lies in the lower town, where the bourse and business offices are, sometimes are obliged to take their dinner in one of the numerous second-class restaurants off the Boulevard Anspach. In any of these a hot *plat*, with beer and coffee afterwards, can be obtained for thirty cents. In the same quarter of the town, but chiefly round the Grand Place and the square of the Monnaie theater, are some of the first restaurants

of the city: the *Filet de Sole*, the *Riche*, the *Etoile*, no longer what it was in the reign of M. Dot, the *Gigot de Mouton*, etc. Fashion and excellence vary, suddenly and without apparent reason; but perhaps the best cooking in Brussels is now to be had at the *Filet de Sole* and the *Provencaux*, while at the *Globe*, which is far less expensive than either, the *cuisine* is surprisingly good. But if the Brussels paterfamilias does not habitually patronize the restaurant, he makes a great effort to dine out on Sunday evening, and to take the grown-up members of his family with him. He may not, in the majority of cases, be able to do this more than once a month, but during the summer he will probably patronize every week one or the other of the *cafés* encircling the Bois de la Cambre, and take his Sunday supper with his family *al fresco*. Even if the repast is limited to one dish for himself and his wife, *tärtines* or *gauffres* for the children, he will sit there the whole evening drinking not immoderately light beer. It is a significant indication of the prevalence of the same views of life throughout the nation, that while the humble citizen is enjoying himself in the less pretentious *cafés*, Society is doing very much the same thing on the terrace of the fashionable Laiterie in the Bois, or farther off at Groenendael, which is reached by a delightful drive through part of the old forest of Soignies. Then the concerts given in the Vauxhall Gardens by the orchestra of the opera are an additional attraction, and on Sundays

in particular bring together a large audience outside the enclosure. To get an idea of the real life of Brussels, one must go about the Boulevards and to the popular resorts on Sunday evenings. Then the people can be seen enjoying themselves in their own quiet, undemonstrative way, and if there is some music going on their contentment is complete. A band is maintained by the municipality, and plays daily in the park fronting the palace. Military bands also play there occasionally, and in the Bois. The band of the regiment of Guides is first-rate and has been heard in London and Paris.

One of the most marked predilections of the Belgian character is his enthusiasm for music. Most nations are ruled by laws, but it would be easier to govern the Belgians by music. Every commune, not merely in Brussels but throughout Belgium, has its band or *symphonie*, and most of those of any size or importance have two, for politics come into question. There will be the Catholic Band and the Liberal Band, and even the Socialists—with a program destructive of everything else that is national—conform to the popular feeling and march to the sound of drums and trumpets. The chief, or at least the most frequent, occasion for the public appearance of these bands is for the funeral of some old or prominent resident, when the *symphonie communale* will attend and lead the procession to the strains of the Dead March.

But in their own halls they always give one or two concerts in the course of a year.

Bearing in mind this trait, it is not surprising that the opera is exceedingly popular. The Théâtre de la Monnaie is an opera house, not a theater, and is noted for the excellence of its orchestra and general management. It has a remarkably long season, beginning in October and going on without interruption to May. A very fair company is attached to the theater, and occasionally singers with a European reputation are engaged for a time. This is especially the case after Easter. Formerly, *débütantēs* of exceptional promise rather inclined to the Monnaie as the scene for their first appearance, because they might feel sure that, if they had the least claim to merit, the appreciative Brussels audience would give them a cordial greeting; and in the event of failure none would be more indulgent.

Brussels is well known in the musical world for its excellent College of Music, and, indeed, the facilities for studying music in all its branches are great, and to be enjoyed at a very reasonable charge, any Belgian student of promise paying nothing at all. For this reason many English and other foreign families take up their residence in Brussels and send their sons or daughters to the Conservatoire, in the Rue de la Regence, where they have to pay only \$40 a year. This institution enjoys a State subsidy, and is more or less under State direction, showing that the Govern-



ment recognizes the importance music has in the estimation of the public. The concerts given by the students at the end of each term, in connection with the distribution of prizes, are attended by great crowds. Owing to the large number of persons interested, tickets are only distributed to the relatives of the students attending the college. A large number of Conservatoire certificate-holders have become subsequently famous in the ranks of musicians and singers. Concerts are given occasionally by well-known performers at the Salle d'Harmonie, at the bottom of the Montagne de la Cour; and when that hall is too small for the audience expected, in the large theater called the Alhambra. There is not a house exclusively reserved for light opera in Brussels, but the Monnaie has of late years somewhat extended its program from its old restricted cultivation of the grand opera.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE MINERS OF THE BORINAGE

ONE of the most remarkable centers of national life is to be found in the coal-mining districts known as "*le Borinage*," which signifies the place of boring. Here is to be found a state of society that does not exist in any other part of the country, and the miners are a type quite distinct from the rest of their countrymen. It would be unfair to judge other Belgians by the mining population, which has been allowed to sink—not merely by the character of their work, but by the deficiencies of education supplemented by the poisonous effect of the fiery and deleterious beverages which the miners too freely imbibe—into a state of physical and mental decay.

The Borinage district lies south of Mons, but it extends westward as far as Quievrain, on the line to Valenciennes. The mines now extend further north than the original Borinage district, and the railway from Tournai to Charleroi, passing by Mons and Marchienne, traverses for a great part of the distance the mining district, the trollies passing from the collieries to railway trucks, or canal barges overhead, as the train glides along. The whole of the southern portion of the province of Hainaut is given up to

mining operations, and more than 100,000 persons are actually employed there. Some idea of the importance of this industry may be gathered from the fact that whereas the output sixty years ago was only two million tons a year, it now exceeds twenty-four million tons. The mines are owned by joint-stock companies; there are no royalties to land-owners, and the State has waived any claim to participate in the profits, because the main object has been to develop national industry. The mines of Hainaut have, therefore, been exploited to exceedingly great profit by the small body of capitalists who became interested in them in the first place, and who tried to keep them a close preserve until the shares were got rid of at high premiums on the Bourse. The halcyon days of the mine-owners were those before the organization of labor. Then the Belgian miners toiled for as many hours underground as he would have done above, and he received a wage which, in the most favorable case, did not reach \$5 a week. That is many years ago, but it had been the general practice during more than two generations, and it has left a deep if not indelible mark on the old mining families. Among these it seems as if there had sprung up a fresh race of dwarfs, men under four feet eight inches, women shorter still, and children who look as if they never will reach even this height. They are stunted and emaciated, and they are easily distinguishable from the rest of the population as the third and fourth generation of the old mining

population. At Frameries and Paturages, where mining has been in existence for a century, this type is very obtrusive.

In no country of Europe did the miners have a harder battle to fight in order to obtain more indulgent treatment and a fairer living wage than in Belgium. The extreme ignorance and illiteracy of the miners left them more or less at the mercy of their masters, and outside sympathy and support were long arrested by the grave assurance that, if the miners were to work fewer hours and to receive more wages, the Belgian mines could not compete with foreign mines, and would have to close altogether. Of course, there was not the least ground for this assertion, but it served its turn, and enabled the owners to remain for a longer time masters of the situation. This state of things could not have endured as long as it did but for the extremely small sum upon which a Belgian workman can maintain his family and himself.

There comes an end, however, to any system that does not take into account the actual necessities and the natural aspirations of the men who support it. Capital had ruled the roost in Belgium for so many years that it looked as if its position were inexpugnable, and as if the miners were consigned to perform the part of helots to the end of the chapter. But the labor party had been growing steadily in influence and organization long before its members possessed a vote, and the spread of Socialism was, it must be ad-

mitted, strengthened by the legitimate grievances of the labor classes. The movement of the *Parti Ouvrier* reached its height in the year 1892, when a general strike was carried out, and after intense suffering the mining population rose in what was practically armed rebellion the following year. At Charleroi, and throughout the Borinage generally, riots occurred and even when the military were called out the result was left doubtful. A more serious calamity indeed seemed not impossible, as the loyalty of the young troops was called in question. At this juncture the mine-owners gave way under pressure from the Government, and a new scale of payment was introduced which, if not all that the men desired, was fair and reasonable. By this scale the average miner's wage was raised to between twenty-five and thirty-five shillings (\$6.25 and \$8.75), and that of women and boys from \$3 to \$5. The maxima might, indeed, be greater but for the protective measures adopted by the miners themselves in the restriction of the output. The labor party organized a scale of production which, while it restricts the maximum earnings of any workman, ensures the prolonged existence of the mines themselves. The limit thus placed on the output of any single mines has rendered it more necessary to discover fresh mines both in Hainaut and elsewhere. And the great increase in production in recent years is due to the new fields discovered in a region known as the Campine. This tract of country is a barren moorland in

the province of Limburg, and the town of Hasselt may be taken as its central point. The discovery that coal could be worked here in paying quantities was made in the year 1900, but before the State would give the license to exploit it the question of the rights in new mines had to be discussed in the Chamber, and fresh legislation passed on the subject. A fresh national asset had been revealed, but for a time it looked as if the Government did not know how to deal with it. The rights of the discoverer, the land-owner, and the State had to be defined, and the miners were propitiated by new laws restricting the hours of labor to eight below ground. It was not until 1909 that all these matters were settled and the first joint-companies were formed to work the new mines. Several shafts have been sunk, and it is understood that the mines are promising, but no statistics are yet available as to the output.

3 A visit to the Borinage is not a pleasant experience, and the closer the acquaintance made with the life of the mining population the less attractive does it appear. All mining work, apparently, must be accompanied by a deterioration in the moral as well as the physical qualities of the population so engaged, and this must be especially marked where the education of the people has been notoriously backward and neglected for generations. In Hainaut the majority of the miners are illiterate, and this condition of things will not be altered until the State makes education com-

pulsory, and places restrictions in the way of the indiscriminate employment of children in the mines; for their non-employment underground is no real remedy. No one has interested himself in the moral and intellectual development of this class of the population, because the State, in carrying out its theory of perfect liberty, does not concern itself with such matters, and leaves the whole responsibility to the commune and the parent, while the Church having lost all influence over the mining population, is only too glad that these hostile classes should be left in a condition of almost utter ignorance.

5- But the most potent of all the reasons which produce this result is that boys and girls, as soon as they have physical strength, which is supposed to be at twelve years of age, are taken on the mining establishment and employed above ground. They thus become bread-winners, and the smattering of learning that they may have acquired as infants is soon reduced to the capacity of signing their names. The employment of children of tender years lies at the root of the ignorance of the people of the greater part of a large province. It is this practice which has led to the gross immorality among the mining population—especially that immorality that takes the form of girl-mothers. It has always been the concomitant of the close employment of the two sexes in mines and mining operations, and if it seems somewhat worse in Hainaut than in our own mining districts, it is because

the mining population of Belgium is so completely detached and cut off from the rest of the community. To the proprietors, with rare exceptions, the miners are mere beasts of burden, in whom they do not effect to feel the least interest. No steps whatever are taken to improve the lot of the miners, to elevate their ideas, or even to provide them with amusement or recreations. There are no clubs, except the *cercles* of the Socialists, and the only places of resort are the *estaminets* and *cabarets* that are to be found in practically every third or fourth house. A premium is placed on illegitimate children. The miner seeks as a wife the woman who has had the greatest number of illegitimate children, because they will contribute to the household expenditure. It is quite a common thing to find in a miner's house a married man with one or two children of his own, and four or even more sons and daughters of the wife by different men in the prenuptial state. It is scarcely going too far to say that morality does not exist in the Borinage; but the greatest curse in this community is the large number of immature mothers, and the consequent inseparable deterioration of the whole race. The evil has been allowed to reach such a pass that the success of any remedies must now be slow and uncertain, and as yet none are even talked of. But certainly something could be done to improve education and to restrain the employment of children. No doubt the miners themselves would at first be most determined



opponents of any such change, because the existing evils are mainly due to their own selfishness and evil habits. The consequent diminution in the earnings of the family could, however, be made up by the increased exertions of the men.

Ignorance and immorality explain the low condition to which the mining population has sunk, but even these causes would not have been supplemented and aided by the prevalence of drunkenness. As there is no restriction on the sale of drink, every house can retail intoxicating liquors, and in many places where it is procurable there is no external appearance of the place being a drinking shop. The room of the cottage will contain a few chairs and benches, besides a table, and the liquor comes from a cupboard or an inner room. In warm weather the table and chairs are placed outside, and on Sundays and feast days there is not one of these houses which will not be crowded with visitors. The only amusement known to these people is to drink and get drunk. There are no abstainers or half abstainers among them. The only distinction between beer-drinkers and spirit-drinkers, the beer-drinkers are the more reasonable drunkards of the two. Having soaked themselves with *faro*, they sleep it off. Not so the spirit-drinkers, for when they have finished their orgies they are half mad with the poisonous alcohol which they have imbibed, and the greater number of crimes are perpetrated by this class among the miners. Crime of all

kinds is prevalent, and the reports of the Hainaut assizes are not pleasant reading. The true explanation of the evils that follow this spirit-drinking is to be found in the character of the spirit itself. In name it is gin or *genièvre*, but it bears little or no trace of that origin. What it is, no one outside the place of manufacture—which appears to be unknown—can correctly declare, but by the smell it would seem to be mainly composed of paraffin oil. This beverage, called *schnick*, is the favorite spirit with the miners. It is sold at one penny for a large glass and one-half penny for a small glass, and official statistics show that a large majority of the miners drink a pint of this stuff every day of their lives, while it is computed that there are not less than fifty thousand who drink a quart. In the latter total are no doubt included many who are not miners, but the majority of them are. In Belgium the drink question is aggravated by the poisonous nature of the intoxicant and by the admitted inability of the Government to devise any means of preventing adulteration. Lest the reader should imagine that there is some exaggeration in the figures just given, it may be mentioned that the total consumption of spirits in the country during a year exceeds fifty quarts per head of the population. This being the case, it will not appear surprising that an extreme toper consumes a quart of the spirits a day. The consequence of this excess are to be seen in the increasing number of lunatics and alcohol-maniacs

confined in the State asylums, and it is observed that of late years the proportion of women has been largely increasing, so that it is now not much short of one to two.

The Government of Belgium is, of course, aware of these facts, and a visit to the Borinage will quickly convince the most skeptical of the extent of the mischief already done, which becomes more glaring every year. But it has been afraid to grapple with the difficulty by passing, for instance, a law to oblige all places where drink is on sale to have a license. The absolute immunity of the drink-shop from all control, the tacit permission given to every house to be at the will of its occupant a public-house, and the fact that there is in existence one drinking-place for every five adults, explain the situation. The State has refrained from interference so long, through its regard for the liberty inscribed in its Constitution, which includes its citizens' liberty to get drunk, that the difficulty has assumed appalling proportions. To interfere with a practice in which every one can put forward some evidence of a vested interest is a perilous step.

On the other hand, the Government is confronted with the prospect that if the evil is allowed to continue unabated, the deterioration of the race which has become marked in certain districts like the Borinage, must bring about a national decline that will constitute a grave peril to the country. If the Government is afraid to diminish the number of houses by

imposing licenses, it might well grapple with the minor problem of arresting adulteration, and putting an end to the consumption of pernicious substitutes for gin. Unless it does something practical for the mitigation of the evil, it will be confronted one of these days with a peril that may overtax its resources, and that must damage its reputation. Ignorance, immorality, and drunkenness have made the mining districts of Belgium a black spot in the national life, and the sooner an era of reform is commenced the better.

Besides the coal mines in Belgium, there are extensive quarries of limestone, red sandstone, granite, and marble. They are to be found in the Ardennes (Luxemburg), the Condroz district (Meuse Valley), the district between Sambre and Meuse, and parts of Hainaut. The Ambleve Valley is remarkable for its red sandstone range. Slate quarries abound in the southern parts of Luxemburg. Lime is largely worked in the valley of the Meuse, and the cement industry is one of the most important in Belgium.

One of the most interesting quarries in Belgium is that of St. Rémy, from which a beautiful red marble is excavated. This quarry has been worked at for centuries, and is still in full use. It originally belonged to the famous Abbey of St. Rémy, which lies about a mile north of the town of Rochefort, and was long the burial place of the Counts of that name who were ruling princes, coining their own money. Little

of the Abbey remains owing to the ravages of time and of the *sans culottes* in 1795, and the Trappists, who had it some years ago, contented themselves with using it as a farm and brewery. Lately it has passed into the possession of the Benedictines, who are engaged in restoring the Abbey to something approaching its original form. The quarry lies about half a mile north of the Abbey, and has been cut out of the side of the rock. Curiously enough it is only at this particular spot that the marble is found. Many other quarries have been opened in the neighborhood with the object of penetrating into the same mountain from different sides, but on finding no trace of marble these have, one after another, been abandoned. The quarry which, before the French Revolution, was the property of the monks, has long been worked by a private company. The stone is not merely of a rich color, but is beautifully grained, and has been largely used for the interior decoration of Belgian churches. In 1908 Belgium exported from her quarries of all kinds stone of the weight of 1,477,058 tons of a total value of \$8,121,500.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE MANUFACTURING CENTERS

TO a very great extent, the prosperity of Belgium is revealed in the commercial activity of Antwerp, and the commercial classes of that city form a community which more nearly resembles our own than any other in Belgium. The pursuit of over-sea commerce has broadened the view of the merchants and shippers of the great port on the Scheldt, and there is less of the communal, or as we should say parochial, spirit about them than any other section of the Belgian people. They are stationed at Belgium's window to the outer world, and they realize better than the rest of their countrymen the precise place filled by their small country. They know, for instance, that the affairs of this planet are not bound up in the petty questions that engross the attention of professional politicians in the *Rue de la Loi*. Consequently they keep aloof from politics and concentrate their energies on making money.

The activity of Antwerp is largely due to the development of the manufacturing centers throughout the country. If Ghent, Liège, and Seraing did not exist, the exports of Belgium, of which we have treated of elsewhere in this volume, could not have

reached their present imposing figures. The prosperity of Belgium is the result of the productive capacity of its citizens, and this is shown in the sphere of manufacture more than elsewhere. Large portions of Belgium seem to be given up as completely to factories as Flanders is to vegetable fields, and the Borinage coal-mines. The coal and iron of Hainaut are the gifts of nature, but the products of Ghent, Seraing, Verviers, and other places too numerous to name, are due to the ingenuity and toil of man alone.

9 ~ Of all Belgian cities, Ghent has the best associations for the English people, and is the home of some of the most interesting bits of history familiar to all. It was the home of John of Gaunt, and this once proud city contains much of, if not all, the pathos and tragedy of the Belgian epic. Until the pacification of 1540, Ghent was a Power in itself. It fell because it did not realize that its pre-eminence among Flemish communes was no proof that it could beard the ruler of a great empire with impunity. It retained the insolence of power long after it had lost the substance, and its fall was both ignominious and irretrievable. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Ghent suffered in special degree from the blight which fell generally upon Flanders. The grass grew in its streets, the canals were unused, and the population steadily declined. From being the rival of potentates and States, Ghent sank into the position of a second rank provincial town. The city that had once boasted

of its quarter of a million inhabitants, and of how with its dependent towns it could put 80,000 combatants in the field, contained less than 40,000 citizens when the French occupied the country in the Revolutionary period. At that time the principal occupation of the citizens of Ghent, and the main source of such prosperity as they possessed, was horticulture, and Ghent, which had been famous for its gloves, became better known for its flowers. It has not lost this reputation today, and the flowers from the glass-houses of Ghent are in much demand, and sold all over the country; but at the same time it has discovered new and more profitable industries in the last century.

The first and main cause of the return of prosperity to Belgium was, it must be admitted, the establishment of peace. It ceased in 1795 to be the cockpit of Europe, and even during the Waterloo campaign a hostile force was on Belgian soil for no more than five days, and Charleroi, then a small place of no importance, was the only one of its towns to undergo military occupation. The cessation of strife, waged by foreign armies on its territory, was the first and main cause of the revival of Belgian industry. Men were able to turn their attention to more remunerative work than the cultivation of the fields with some reasonable prospect of enjoying the fruits of her own labor. While a larger area was brought under cultivation, commerce, however timidly, began to appeal



to the townspeople. The population, long stationary, commenced to show signs of expansion.

Ghent was the first place to feel the new influence. Admirably situated for purposes of trade by means of its water communication in many different directions, Ghent was able, in the days before the railways, to despatch its wares by the cheap and sufficiently expeditious transport provided by canal and river barges. It thus found convenient markets in Brussels, which always enjoyed a certain prosperity as the residence of a Court, and in Antwerp, which was largely dependent on the country lying at its back. In the old days the weavers and fullers of Ghent had made its prosperity. It was, therefore, natural that when the revival of the place commenced, its citizens should turn in the same channel. The first factory set up in modern Ghent was one for cloth, during the French occupation, and it was busily employed in turning out a large part of the material used in providing Napoleon's soldiers with their uniform. During the Dutch rule, which extended from 1815 to 1830, the manufacture of cotton goods was introduced; but this did not become at all general until after the year 1839, when the independence of Belgium was rendered more assured by the recognition of the fact by Holland. After that event, cotton and woolen manufactures became a staple industry in Ghent, and the output increased every year, so that it

seemed no undue exaggeration to speak of it as the Belgian Manchester. The prosperity of Ghent received a rude interruption in 1861 through the outbreak of the American Civil War, which cut off the supply of cotton, and produced the greatest distress. The suffering was increased by a serious outbreak of cholera, and for a time it seemed as if Ghent had only risen to fall again. After the conclusion of the struggle in the United States, the enterprise that had been interrupted reasserted itself, and the cholera having led to many sanitary improvements, the city took on a new lease of life. The lace and embroidery industry, which had been carried on in a modest way in the houses of the workpeople themselves, was transferred to the factories, and was developed with all the appliances of capital and science. An entirely new business was introduced by the opening of works for the construction of engines and agricultural implements. There is, therefore, no doubt as to the activity of the business life of the city. No proof, indeed, can be clearer than that its population now exceeds 160,000. Ghent, besides being an active commercial and manufacturing center, is also a fine city, and a pleasant place of residence. It contains some very interesting monuments of its medieval grandeur, and although the bell of mighty Roland is heard no more in the land, there is an effective carillon of forty-four bells in the belfry, from which it used to give forth "victory" or the "alarm for fire."

70 In striking contrast to Ghent is Seraing, where the greatest foundry and engine works of Belgium were established by an Englishman two years after Waterloo. This was Cockerill, who fixed upon Seraing as the best spot for his enterprise, in which he had the cordial support of King William I of the Netherlands, who subscribed half the capital. The site of the works, which now cover 260 acres, and employ 15,000 workpeople, was happily chosen at an old *château* with extensive grounds, which had once been the summer residence of the Prince-Bishops of Liège. The *château* is still used as the house of the resident director, and as a library. Formerly the spot was one of the most picturesque in the environs of Liège. Now both banks of the river are lined with furnaces and factories, for Jemeppe, Ougrée, Scles-sin, and Tilleur are imitators of Seraing. The valley is also carboniferous, and there are numerous coal-mines. The Liège collieries rank next to those of Hainaut in importance, and some authorities think that they will be productive for a longer period.

Seraing is situated five miles above Liège on the right bank of the Meuse. There is communication between the two places by river steamer, tramway, and railway. By the last census its population exceeded 38,000, and it may be assumed that every one resident in the town is connected with or dependent on the Cockerill establishment. In 1831, after the separation of the two countries, Cockerill repaid King

William his share of the capital, and remained sole proprietor until his death in 1840. The concern was then turned into a company, with the modest capital of \$2,500,000. In 1871 the capital was increased, and the descendants of Cockerill having died out or retired, the business became exclusively Belgian. The record of the Seraing works is a very remarkable one, especially in the construction of railway and other steam engines, of which close on 60,000 have been turned out since the commencement of that branch in 1835. With its present staff it can construct annually 150 locomotives, 2,000 engines, steam and hand, and 300,000 quintals (or 15,000 tons) of font for bridges, etc. The iron casements for the new forts at Namur and Liége itself were cast in the Seraing foundries. Seraing may be compared in some respects to the Armstrong works at Elswick and the Krupp works at Essen, and it is well to remind the Belgians that their country owes this now national undertaking to the capital and enterprise of an Englishman.

Seraing is, in a certain sense, only an annex of the important city of Liége close by. In many respects // - Liége is the most remarkable place in Belgium, remarkable for its magnificent position, for the activity of its citizens, and for its history, which has, in a certain sense, been detached from that of the rest of the country. Liége is the natural and typical capital of the Walloon country, just as Ghent is of the Flemish. Both cities are now at the height of their pros-

perity, and contain about the same population. If, however, Seraing and Chénée were included as suburbs of Liège, which they are in reality, Liège would have a very marked superiority over Ghent. There is probably more wealth in Liège than in Ghent, but there is also more misery. The poor quarters of the town on both banks of the river are very repulsive, and the old delapidated lofty houses, built up against the side of the mountain on which stands the citadel, are not worse than the new tenements across the river at Bressoux. The staple industry at Liège, upon which its prosperity depends, is the manufacturing of arms, and this fact has led to its being called the Birmingham of Belgium. There is one distinctive practice which brings out the marked difference between the two countries and peoples. The Birmingham gunsmiths work in shops where weapons are turned out by the thousands. In Liège the individual works in his own abode, and takes each single weapon on completion to the gunshop for sale. It is said there are forty thousand working gunsmiths in Liège and its suburbs. It would appear a risky means of livelihood, for each piece is carefully inspected and tested before acceptance at the warehouses, and the least defect is said to cause summary rejection. Opinions differ as to the quality of Liège firearms, but there is one point in which they beat all competitors, and that is in lowness of price. An enormous business is done in single-barreled guns, that are sold at \$3.75

apiece. As this class of gun has a rapid and sure sale, the preparation of first-class weapons has grown less attractive for the workman, who thinks only of earning his living in the easiest and surest way, and who seems to be quite content when he makes \$5 a week. With a view of arresting this tendency, and preventing the loss of an important branch of the trade, several factories for the manufacture of rifles have been opened of late years, and there is also a cannon foundry. The last named and one of the rifle factories belong to the State. It may be added that the former is now busily occupied in casting the new guns for the Belgian artillery. At all times the citizens of Liége have been noted for their independence, and it might even be said quarrelsome, spirit. The fact that each man is more or less his own master has greatly contributed to keep alive the sentiment of independence, and the working classes are organized by leagues, societies, and clubs. The Socialists are very powerful, but there is also a genuine Catholic party among them.

Among other manufacturing centers less widely known than Ghent and Liége, which are springing into importance, are Gembloux, Ath, Renaix, and Diest. At Gembloux the state railways have established their engine and carriage works, which employ several thousand hands. There is also a factory for excellent cutlery at this place. Ath, on the Dender, is the center of the important lime manufacture, and

being in direct water communication by river and canal with most parts of Belgium, it is able to deliver this article by the most economical mode of transport. Renaix has developed an important cloth industry, and Diest is the center of the brewing enterprise of the country, and might be compared to Burton-on-Trent. Malines is still famous for its lace, although Grammont, interesting as the first of the communes to receive a charter, is running it hard in the matter of "point." Tournai produces most of the carpets to which Brussels gives its name. Artistic carpets are also produced at Termonde, where there are also extensive oil works. Verviers, a large town east of Liège, flourishes on a considerable manufacture of woollen goods and of glass. Within the last few years the competition of German works at Eupen has been so keen that several of the Belgian glass companies have suspended operations. A new industry is being developed in cement and a composition that serves as an excellent pavement. In no manufacturing district of Belgium are the vicissitudes of trade through external competition greater or more sudden than at Verviers.

The condition of the artisan classes in Belgium is probably better than in France, although it falls a long way below that of English workmen, especially in respect of hours of labor. These are unquestionably long to excess, and are really fixed by the will of the employer. The language of the law on the em-

ployment of children is very instructive. No child can be employed in a factory or a warehouse until he is twelve, which means that all children of the working classes begin their life of toil at twelve. This explains the stunted appearance of the population of the larger towns and manufacturing districts. The law says, in the second place, that no child under sixteen is to be kept at work for more than twelve hours a day. If the young can work this length of time, it will be understood that an adult is assumed to be capable of doing more. At the same time, the long hours do not hang as so great a burden on the Belgian working man as they would on Americans. The race has always been accustomed to early hours, and as there are no great distractions except *fête* days, the Belgian takes his pleasure in his work.

From a careful estimate made by a Belgian statistician the average earnings of the Belgian artisan are \$165 a year. This average includes child-labor, which partially explains the lowness of the figure. Personal inquiry showed me that in Liège and Ghent the workmen expect to earn a minimum eighty cents a day, or about \$5 a week. They seem to be perfectly contented if they can earn a dollar a day, but besides the earnings of the man of the house are those of his wife and children. And they get along fairly well on this income. The Belgians are not great meat-eaters, and the Belgian wife is usually an economic and good cook. A nourishing soup forms the basis of the food



in a Belgian home, and the bread they use is of the whole grain and much more substantial than our bread.

The daily life of the factory operative is not as easily described as that of the miner, who lives under special conditions which differentiate him from the regular community, and which are treated of elsewhere in this volume. The mill-hand, the potter, or the lace-maker will pursue the mode of living agreeable to himself, in complete obliviousness of what his fellow workers may do, except in regard to points of common trade interest. The bond that links him to his class is that not of his work, but of his commune, which is the chief source of Belgian unity. Hence, any attempt to give an account of the daily life of all factory operatives, as something fashioned in the same pattern, would be incorrect and misleading. At the same time, there are some points about the Belgian artisan which may seem of interest. His condition of life and general well-being furnish no inexact index to the national welfare, and, speaking relatively, they may be pronounced quite as high as in any country of Europe. The Belgian operative has command of all the necessities of life, and he has also a surplus left for some of its luxuries, or, at least, some of its relaxations. His hours of labor may be many, but they are lightened by some hours of amusement, and a not infrequent holiday. If the café does not suffice for his leisure hours, there is always the *cercle*—

Catholic, or Liberal, or Socialist; and the *cercle* will have its band of music, its dances, and other annual or more frequent celebrations. The life of the operative is consequently by no means dull or unvaried. It is no dreary round of labor; there is ample time for pleasure, and the Belgian character, whether Walloon or Flemish, is not prone to take its pleasures sadly.

There is another feature in the life of the Belgian workingman that is interesting. He has his political associations and clubs. The *Parti Ouvrier* is organized throughout the kingdom for political agitation and the attainment of universal suffrage. But, in addition, certain co-operative societies have been formed for retailing to their members practically all the articles of which they have any need. These exist in all the large towns, but the two largest are those known as the *Maison du Peuple* in Brussels and the *Vooruit* in Ghent. At these stores everything is sold at the cost of production, plus five per cent for the administration, from a loaf of bread to the furniture of a house. An excellent loaf of bread weighing nearly two pounds and a half is sold for twopence, and at the *Maison du Peuple* in Brussels over 160,000 such loaves are sold each week. As there are 16,000 members, the average consumption is ten loaves a week. Of late years, these societies have taken an active part in the struggle with drunkenness by excluding spirits and beer from their lists, and in the refreshment room

attached to their stores coffee and lemonade are the only beverages sold. Although I have only mentioned two of these societies, there are in Belgium about four hundred of the same nature.

There are also saving- and sick-fund branches attached to most of these societies. The basis on which they are formed is a monthly payment of sixty cents to the former and twenty cents to the latter. For these subscriptions a member is guaranteed medical attendance and twenty cents a day during illness, and his annual savings are practically doubled by the additions made to them under the law by the State and also by the provinces, while there is a further voluntary grant by the society itself. As the most staid Belgian workman deems that he has the moral right to spend twenty cents a day on his drink, it does not seem to be asking him to practice much self-denial to put by twenty cents a week for a rainy day. It is right to mention that there are no grounds for supposing that he grumbles at having to do so. There is a new State Pension Bill that is calculated to encourage thrift. It came into effect in 1900, and by it the Government undertakes to pay every working man in need after he is sixty-five an annual pension of \$13 a year.

Taking a comprehensive view of the position of the working classes in Belgium, it will compare not unfavorably with that of those in any other country. In one particular only is there pressing need of amelioration, and, as we have seen, that is in the length of

hours of labor. It is probable that a reform would already have taken place in this matter but for the fact that political questions have become mixed up with social problems. The agitation is not one for eight or nine hours a day as the regular spell for the working classes in factories, but it is one for universal suffrage, the abolition of the plural vote, and the fettering of capital by the enforcement of Socialist theories of distribution and joint participation. It is unfortunate that these political matters have been connected with labor questions, and that natural concessions have been deferred by the fear of what those to whom they were made might do afterwards.

## CHAPTER XV

### COUNTRY LIFE IN BELGIUM

AS considerably more than half the population of Belgium resides outside the towns, the conditions of country life form quite as important a part of the nation's existence as those of the *bourgeois* classes. There are parts of the little kingdom, such as Luxemburg and Campine, where the population is sufficiently sparse to leave something like the accepted conditions of genuine country life; but in Flanders, Hainaut, and Brabant, the population is so dense that the farms and cottages occupy practically every available spot that can be utilized for a building without diminishing the area of the cultivable ground. Leaving aside the mining districts, the western provinces of Belgium present in the main the appearance of vast market-gardens without a hedge or a wall. The boundaries are marked by nothing more than an insignificant trench. The cultivation of wheat and cereals generally is being increased; but this is due more to the absorption of new land reclaimed from forest or heath than to the abandonment of vegetables. In Flanders, which was formerly given up exclusively to the cultivation of roots, however, it is not uncommon to see nowadays part of a half-acre

plot assigned to a wheat crop, and the rest to cabbages.

If one wished to study the agricultural system of Belgium, and to see what has been accomplished there, a visit should certainly be paid to the district called Pays de Waes. This district lies west of the Scheldt, and southeast of Antwerp, and extends almost to Ghent. Its chief town is St. Nicholas, and Lokeren, another town of the Waes country, is scarcely less important. In 1839, the whole of the district was a wild, uncultivated tract. Now it is an unbroken expanse of gardens and fields, sustaining a resident population of five hundred persons to the square mile. There has been no such transformation scene in any part of Europe, and it would be a good experiment to tempt some Belgian agriculturists to see what they could do in some other countries—Ireland, for instance, or the abandoned land in our New England States.

Throughout the two Flanders, which produce more than half the total crops of the country, there are no large landed proprietors, and the soil is parcelled out in small lots among the peasants themselves. The farmer class in these provinces exists only to this extent, that where the commune owns the lands it has chosen to sublet them to a farmer with the means to work several hundred acres instead of dividing the land into allotments. But in Flanders the farmer is the exception, and the small proprietor of anything

up to five acres is the rule, while in Hainaut and Brabant it is different. There the farmer class is in the ascendant. A historical cause lies at the root of this difference. Up to the French occupation in 1795, the soil of Belgium was the property in the main of the representatives of the aristocracy, civic as well as feudal, and of the Church. The religious orders were the chief proprietors, owning more than double the cultivated land possessed by the nobles. This was explained by the fact that the Church owned lands to make them revenue producing, and possessed the capital to do so. The nobles were not rich in capital, and a very large proportion of their territorial possessions consisted of forest and unreclaimed land. As they kept these possessions for the chase, they did not even think of developing them. When the French Republic annexed Belgium, all the lands possessed by churchmen and nobles were at once made forfeit, and the actual occupiers and tillers of the soil came into possession. At that time Flanders was just as much an agricultural country as it is today. But in the other provinces the same conditions did not prevail. Only a small portion of the soil was under cultivation, the population was scanty, and with local exceptions there were no peasants eager to take over estates that had fallen vacant and that were at their disposal. Moreover, the land had to be cleared and won over for cultivation, which required capital. For these reasons a race of peasant proprietors was not

created in Brabant and Namur as had been done in accordance with easily discoverable natural laws in Flanders. When the heat of the republicans were cooled down, there is no doubt that many of the former proprietors recovered their possessions partly by occupying what no one else claimed, and partly by repurchase from the State or the commune on nominal terms. This tendency became more marked under the Emperor Napoleon, and especially after he made his peace with the Pope. After his overthrow there was a general recovery of territorial possessions by the aristocracy, subject to the recognition of the rights of occupation that had accumulated in twenty years. But in Flanders nothing of the sort took place. There the new rights entirely displaced the old title-deeds.

The class of great landed proprietors in Belgium is exceedingly small, and there are many of the old *noblesse* without any land at all. Those who are more fortunate possess, as a general rule, not more than a thousand acres round their country residence, and the only great estates are to be found in the Ardennes and Campine, where land possessed but little value until a quite recent period. The history of the estate of the Duke of Wellington, as Duke of Waterloo, in Belgium furnishes an instance of what took place when the representatives of the ancient owners recovered the non-productive portions of their estates. The Duke was granted, as a reward for his great victory in Belgium, a portion of the old forest of Soignies.



It was about five thousand acres in extent; but the only income the great Duke ever derived from it was from the timber, which must have been quite insignificant. Upon his death his son and successor was confirmed in the possession of this estate, after some persons had represented that it was only granted for the life of the first duke. He then expressed the opinion to some Belgian officials that the estate about which so much stir was being made was really valueless, whereupon Baron Lambermont advised him to place it in the hands of the *régisseur* or manager of the Duc d'Arenberg, who had vastly improved the estates of that nobleman at Enghien and elsewhere. The advice was followed, and in a few years the timber was all cut down and sold, and on his part of the old forest a number of farms were created. The estate then for the first time brought in an income; but the story is merely told here to illustrate the process which went on generally in Belgium outside of Flanders after Waterloo, and in a still more marked degree after the establishment of an independent kingdom.

14 The conditions of life among the agricultural classes of Flanders would be considered intolerably hard by the agricultural laborer in England or America, and even the sense of possessing the land on which they toil would not atone for them. The Flemish peasant, or proprietor, labors all day, and his day is the long one from sunrise until long after sunset.

Any one who has lived in the Belgian provinces has seen gray figures moving along the roads or across the fields, while gleams of light alone showed the dawn of the coming day. They wish to be at their work, discontinued late the night before, as soon as there is sufficient light to enable them to resume it. They are working for themselves, and very likely they would grumble if they were asked to do it for a master. But it is not only the men, but also the women who work thus. There are, of course, household duties and work at home to be performed; but these do not prevent the women and girls from toiling in the fields as well. Market-gardening carried on in the fashion of the Continent, where nothing is wasted, cannot be considered an altogether pleasant or even healthy occupation. It is certainly not calculated to elevate those who take part in it in intelligence, and as a matter of fact the vast body of Flemish laborers in the fields are sunk in a state of extraordinary ignorance for the twentieth century. Their education is practically nothing at all, but they are sound Catholics, and it is not thought to be to the interest of the Church, or the party that claims that designation, that they should progress in worldly knowledge.

To judge the people of Flanders plains by a cursory inspection, the conclusion come to would probably be that they must be exceedingly miserable and unhappy, and it requires a far more intimate knowledge than most foreigners are ever likely to take the

trouble to acquire to discover that such is not really the case. Their workaday clothes are not of a character to impress the observer with a perception of anything in their favor. They are certainly not picturesque, and they are generally very dirty. They all wear the wooden sabot, yellow in color and clumsy in form. Their stockings are always coarse worsted and grey. Their short trousers are always tied with a ribbon above the calf, and they wear a linen smock. The usual headgear of the men is a cap with a peak, and the women have linen bonnets with a kind of hood over the forehead. If their dress is plain, their living is still plainer. Their breakfast consists of no more than coffee and rye bread, their midday meal of bread and butter, or grease—*tartine*—with which they sometimes have cheese or a little cold bacon, and their supper of soup and bread. On Sundays and *fête* days they have hot bacon, and occasionally rabbits or fish. Fresh meat never comes their way, and is practically unknown. On the other hand, they eat great quantities of vegetables, cooked and uncooked, and dandelion salads are the luxury of the Belgian peasant. It is somewhat difficult to get at an idea of the results of their toil; but the average amount of the produce of the land has been reckoned at \$100 the half acre. On this sum a Flemish family will contrive to live, having no rent to pay, and supplementing the produce of the field with a pig and poultry. There

are 650,000 men and boys employed in agriculture alone.

In order to correct the depressing effect of the spectacle of these peasant proprietors in their week-day costumes, when they strike the observer as mere drudges bound in misery, it is as well to take a glance at the same people on Sundays going to or returning from mass. The whole population goes; there are no non-attendants here, except from illness and those who are bedridden. And what do we see? All the men wearing respectable black suits and boots; the women are well dressed and carry themselves well, and there are bright-colored parasols to protect from the sun the girls and young women who have been toiling in the fields all the week with no protection save a linen hood. It is difficult to realize that these are the same people; but it is quite clear from their animated conversation and laughter that they are far from unhappy or dissatisfied with their lot.

In the Walloon country the conditions of agricultural life are quite different. The country population is scanty, and the cultivation of the land is in the hands of farmers who have rented it from the landed owners or from the communes. The inhabitants show a tendency to gather in little towns, and not to spread over the country in detached cottages close to their work, but separated from their fellow-beings. When the outskirts of a townlet or large village are passed, not a house will be met with along the road until the

next village is reached. Now in Flanders the cottages are scattered all over the country, and dot the *chaussée*, or high-road. There is another marked difference. In Flanders the country house with any extent of garden or park-land attached, is quite a rarity. There are still a few old manor houses left, but they have only a small piece of ground round them. But in Liège, Limburg, and Luxemburg it is different. There are still a certain number of old *château* and *chalets* left, and rich manufacturers from the cities have built a good many new country houses. All these have gardens and coverts attached to them. Some of the old houses are singularly picturesque and striking, such as the *château* of Mirwart; and the *château* of Dave, with its forest of many thousand acres, is quite imposing. The majority of the old country houses resemble a manor house or mediæval farm in England. They are almost uniformly built in a yellowish-brown stone, which is taken from the Luxemburg quarries. They have generally farm buildings attached, sometimes in unpleasant proximity to the residence. These old houses harmonize with the landscape, and suggest the existence of a country life which might be compared with that of our own land. But none of the members of the *petite noblesse*, to which they mainly belong, have much income, and consequently their mode of living is conducted on lines of the strictest economy. They are also very exclusive, not so much perhaps

from family pride—for the history of these families is quite provincial, and the majority of their names have never been heard of outside of their little circle—as from the dislike to being eclipsed by the wealthy newcomers from the towns. They keep to themselves and their own set, giving a few dinners in the course of the year to their relatives, and inviting a few of their neighbors whom they regard as equals. These dinners are always held at one o'clock, and the afternoon is passed in testing the quality of the host's Burgundy, the favorite wine of the Belgians, which is nowhere found in greater perfection than in the cellar of an Ardennes connoisseur. All these country gentlemen call themselves sportsmen, but there is very little game on which they can exercise their skill, owing to the absence of any system of preserving. Rabbits alone can be described as being plentiful. It is the fashion, however, for a certain number to club together and rent a *chassée* in one or other of the forests owned by the communes. Here a certain amount of game of a miscellaneous nature is to be had, and during the season a subscriber may hope to get as his share some venison and a little wild-boar. Pheasants are only to be found on the well-stocked preserves of the Count de Limburg Stirum, and a few other noblemen. Teal and wild-duck still abound, however, on the upper courses of the Ourthe, and woodcock and snipe are also plentiful throughout the Meuse Valley. During part of the season every-

body is allowed to snare these birds at their pleasure.

In striking contrast with these old houses, representing the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are the modern villa or *châlet*, which the manufacturer or shop-keeper, having made a competence, constructs as his *maison de campagne*. These are always built in some brick or stone of glaring colors, white, red, and yellow are the favorite colors, with green verandas and window frames, and gray or blue slate roofs. It is, in fact, the favorite town-house transported bodily into the country, and to which covered balconies for the purpose of enjoying the air and the view have been added. They are evidence of the liking that the Belgians have for country life, although they do not add to the beauty of the landscape. There must always be something incongruous in the appearance of a yellow match-box-like house, rising out of the wooded crest of a hill, that presents in itself a charming and perfect bank of verdure. At the same time it must be allowed that this attraction of wealthy families from the towns to the country is a benefit for the inhabitants of those provinces where there has never been much wealth or any rich class of residents to develop them. Every favored spot in the region named has its well-to-do resident from Liège or Brussels, and as soon as one settles down others follow at no long interval. The La Roche Valley, for instance, is overlooked by a considerable number of these villas, and many Liège manufacturers permanently re-

side in their country houses on the banks of the Vesdre and the Amblève. These newcomers, although they evince a partiality for the country by fixing their residence in it, do not take up the pursuits of the country. They really live a town life in the country. They do not drive much in the sense of traversing distance, and they walk less. They only saunter about their places, if the phrase may be used. Even gardening, in which they take most interest, is done in a languid fashion. They pass a great part of the day in the open air, sitting on their balconies admiring the view which they have been specially built to command, and which their owners see every day without palling on them. In fact, they have raised the habit of doing nothing in the open air to the level of a science.

The houses of the Walloon peasantry are more substantial and attractive-looking than those of Flanders. They are generally built of stone, and slates are easily obtainable from the numerous slate quarries; while in Flanders the houses are brick covered with stucco, which is generally painted, or rather washed, with a yellow mixture. The ground floor usually consists of one large room that is both sitting-room and kitchen, while at the back there is a wash-house. Two or three bedrooms overhead and a loft under the roof usually complete the accommodation. There is often a cellar and a penthouse for the storage of wood; for the collection of undergrowth in the forests is un-



restricted, and at the commencement of winter there is a free distribution of firewood by the communes. Poultry and the small vegetable garden supplement the earnings of the householders, and during the summer months at least there is plenty of work going on through the large influx of visitors from other parts of Belgium and from foreign countries. The Walloon is just as restricted in his diet as his Flemish conationalist. He lives on meager fare, and flourishes on it; but he does not work as hard as the Flemings do. He is more easily contented and spends a good deal of his day in gossip. The Walloons of Liège are, however, different from those of Luxemburg. They are a bigger and a burlier race, probably because they are meat-eaters, and they are the most impressive type among the Belgian nationalities.

Country life in Belgium is pleasant enough during the fine weather of summer and autumn, but in the winter it requires all the available philosophy of those who have to remain in the provinces. There is practically nothing to be done. Those who have to gain their own living depend during the winter on what they have put by in the summer. If it has been a good season, they are comfortable; if visitors have been few, they are pinched, and relieved when the spring brings fresh hope. Those who have not the care of daily existence upon their shoulders pass through the winter months in a state of stagnation, or overpowered at last by ennui, rush off to Brussels

or Liège. As has been said, rural Belgium is merely a repetition of town life; there is no genuine country life at all. A Belgian goes into the provinces to move at his ease, to enjoy the open air when it is fine, and to hurry back to his city as soon as the leaves are off the trees, and the November mists and snow begin to put in an appearance. The less fortunate country gentleman, who has no town residence, has to put up with things. The only excitement he will be likely to have is when the wild-boar are driven by the cold to leave the forest for the farms in search of food, and then a great battue is organized, in which he will take a leading part.

## CHAPTER XVI

### RELIGION AND EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS

**T**HE religious question in Belgium requires very careful handling, more especially as it has become mixed up with party politics. But it will clear the ground to mention that while there is no state religion in modern Belgium, there is only one religion in the country and that is the Catholic, or, as we say for distinction, the Roman Catholic. In a population now approaching eight millions there are said to be 10,000 Protestants (French and English churches) and 5,000 Jews. Flemings and Walloons alike are Catholics. There is, of course, a difference in the intensity of their faith and fervor, and, speaking broadly, irreligion and free-thought are somewhat marked characteristics of some classes among the Walloons, while they must be considered as totally non-existent among the Flemings. Among those practicing a religion there is no difference between Walloons and Flemings.

This being the case, it will be interesting to explain how it is that there is no State religion in Belgium, and that in the eyes of the law the faith of the whole people counts no more than the cults of a small minority, chiefly aliens.

Before the French Revolution the Church ranked among the States with the nobility and the citizens. When the States or National Parliament were summoned, the dioceses sent their bishops, deans, and abbots to the assembly. Liège and Stavelot did not send to the States, but they had their own separate constitutions based on the supremacy of the Church, and more or less dependent on the Pope. The French Revolution ended this system, and after the downfall of the Empire it was not restored. The explanation of this may be found in the fact that the creation of the kingdom of the Netherlands in 1815 was based on the supremacy, tacit if not expressed, of a Protestant dynasty. Catholic bishops and deans could not expect much consideration from the House of Orange. They received even less than they expected. By Articles 190-6 of the Fundamental Law of 1815 all creeds alike were promised protection, and there was to be perfect freedom of conscience. A still ruder blow was dealt by the refusal to sanction even a partial restoration of the lands confiscated in 1794, for the Church found itself almost stripped of its possessions, and without the means of organizing the defense of what remained of its ancient privileges. During the whole of the Dutch régime the Church was in a languishing condition, and only in Ghent and Bruges did its leaders continue the struggle with an unfriendly Government.

Such was the position of affairs so far as the Church was concerned when the Belgian revolution

broke out in August, 1830. The revolution was in a certain sense the sequel of the July revolution in France which dispossessed the Legitimist Bourbons for the Constitutional Orleanists. It was certainly brought about to a large extent by French influences which at that moment were non-clerical. It was also not at all clear what would be put in the place of the deposed Dutch administration. For these reasons and also on account of its own internal difficulties the Church did not take a prominent part in the Belgian insurrection, and when the National Congress was summoned, the Clerical party was the least numerous and influential section in the assembly. Besides, French ideas as well as language prevailed. No one would have the audacity to speak in Flemish, and Flanders was even then the stronghold of the Church. No one in Belgium would have proposed that the Church lands refused in 1815 should be restored in 1830-31.

This situation explains how it was that in a Congress composed of Catholics no one protested when the Constitution framers recommended the separation of Church and State. But the Church itself betrayed unusual apathy in not making some effort to recover at least part of its ancient rights and position. The overthrow of the Protestant Dutch Government did not entail any difference in the religious clause of the fundamental law. All cults were to be free and equal in the eyes of the law; no one was to be disqualified

from public office on account of his religious opinions. One reservation only was made. It was stipulated that the Sovereign of the country should be a Catholic, but the condition had to be waived in the case of Leopold I, who refused to change his religion. His children were, however, brought up in the old faith, and the clause of the Constitution stipulating that the Sovereign must be a member of the Catholic Church may now be regarded as possessing full and permanent force.

2 Since the reign of Philip II, when the Pope first created the dignity and conferred it on the celebrated Cardinal Granvelle, the Archbishop of Malines has been Primate of Belgium. The number of bishops dependent on him has varied at different periods, but since modern Belgium came into existence they have been limited to five. They are Liège, Ghent, Bruges, Tournai, and Namur. The last official return shows that the total number of the clergy in the six dioceses amounts to 190 of the rank of deans and 5,602 of the inferior ranks of the hierarchy. All these ministers receive a salary from the State. The Archbishop is allowed \$4,500 a year and each Bishop \$3,000 a year.

Each diocese is divided into a certain number of curés, and each curé receives \$410 a year and is provided with a house. The vicaires, who correspond to curates with us, rarely receive more than \$150 a year, but they reside in the curé's house. In measuring the importance of these salaries it must be remembered

that the clergy are all celibates. Besides in each church or chapel there are special collecting boxes for the support of the clergy, and a part of the general offertories goes to the up-keep of the Church, which necessarily includes the sustenance of its clergy. The regular clergy are consequently far more comfortable and well cared for than the small official salary would seem to convey. All receipts go into a common fund, and it is breaking no secret to say that they live very well. Good food and plenty of it is still an ideal of Belgian life, and the priests are no exception to the rule. They are also very hospitable, and when they detain a friend to dinner, a bottle of Burgundy will not fail to be forthcoming. In the provinces the house of the curé has always a vegetable garden, and generally a wall for fruit, and for the favored guest there will follow a choice dessert as well.

Besides the regular clergy there are the various religious orders which have always been prominent and prosperous in Belgium. Before the French Revolution it was computed that they owned half the land in Belgium, and it is still the practice of the Socialists to denounce them, because by the mere fact that they are better organized than ordinary individuals their wealth accumulates, and their possessions by growth attract more notice.

The following statistics show their exact strength and position in the country. In the year 1900 (the latest for which these statistics were published) there

were 2,474 separate religious houses in the country. These were divided into 291 for men and 2,183 for women. They were inhabited by 6,237 priests or brothers, and 31,668 nuns and sisters. Of the former 4,597 were born in Belgium and of the latter 26,368. It follows that 1,690 men and 5,300 women of the total conventional population of Belgium were foreigners.

The greater number of these orders are devoted to practical objects. There are 389 houses devoted to the care of the sick, 1,248 to education, and only 178 to an exclusively religious ministration; 47 combine nursing and religious contemplation, and 263 teaching and religious contemplation. Over 17,000 nuns and sisters are engaged in some form or other of female instruction. Most of the nursing in Belgium is done by the religious orders, and some of them have taken up the profession in full conformity with the rules and requirements of modern science. This is especially the case in the large cities.

In 1907 the Government grant to the Catholic clergy amounted to \$1,250,000 for the year, and a further sum of \$180,000 was allocated for Church buildings. Other expenses figured at \$10,000. The reader will be able to form an opinion for himself as to the relative position of the several creeds in Belgium when it is stated that the grants to Protestants and Jews together amounted to no more than \$29,400. It is impossible to give any idea of the total value of



the Church possessions in Belgium, but perhaps \$250,000,000 is not an overstatement.

Although the Church of Rome then is not the State Church in Belgium, it possesses an unquestioned predominance that no one could dispute. When modern Belgium was formed, it happened to be in a languishing and embarrassed condition. For many years it possessed no efficient organization and the spoils of power remained with the party which was anti-Catholic. But fifty years ago the Catholics decided to make their influence felt, and they, too, began to organize as their opponents had been doing for thirty years before in the press and among the public. This they did with such consummate skill that they ousted the Liberals from office in 1884, and they have retained the administrative power ever since. The hold which they have established on the mass of the people is not altogether due to cleverness and skill. It has been effected and strengthened by the great services the clergy have rendered and are rendering to the people of Belgium. It is impossible to ignore the fact that they do their best to assist their congregations in every way, and the credit of all the best work in Belgium for the relief of the poor and the suffering must go to them. The so-called Liberal organization is purely political. It is not marked by any beneficent work, it aims wholly at the placing of a particular party in power.

It would be impossible to give even a skeleton of a

original law, That of 1910 is the most radical, for it will possibly lead to the substitution of Flemish for French as the vernacular language in many of the schools of Brabant and Hainaut. In the year 1908 there were 914,709 pupils in primary schools subject to State inspection, and of these only 50,861 paid any fees. There were in the year named 7,355 schools divided between 4,629 communal and 2,726 "adopted" schools. The adopted schools are those recognized as existing at the time of the passing of the law of 1842. They are chiefly Church schools, and with regard to female education they are more numerous than those belonging to the commune. The total cost of these schools in 1907 is given at about \$10,600,000, of which the State provided nearly 21, the commune nearly 27, the provinces  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , and parents  $1\frac{3}{4}$ , all in million francs, the balances coming from minor sources. The total number of teachers in the year 1908 was 19,707. These may be subdivided into 8,313 male lay teachers, and 795 priests, and 5,113 female lay teachers, and 5,486 sisters of the different religious orders. This, in its way, furnishes proof that the Church has a closer hold on female than male education.

Primary education is not confined to children. There are primary schools for adults whose education has been neglected or never commenced. In 1908, which showed an enormous increase in the system as compared with previous years, there were

4,473 of those schools with a total attendance of 227,220. The communal schools had 71,433 males and 14,159 females inscribed on their lists, while the totals for the adopted schools were 53,673 males and 87,955 females. The grand total of persons receiving primary education is over 1,142,000.

According to the law primary education is supposed to continue till the age of fourteen, but as a matter of fact it ceases at twelve unless it is intended that the pupil shall pass into a secondary school. These, of course, are a comparative minority and consist chiefly of candidates for Government posts.

Secondary education is divided into two grades, preparatory and superior. Of preparatory schools there are over 78 State, 6 communal, and 5 under priests' patronage for boys, and 34 State and 10 communal for girls. In 1909 the numbers of pupils at the former, taken in their order, were 15,375, 2,662, and 623; and for girls 6,207 and 2,665 respectively.

The superior grade schools are 20 Royal Athenæums, 7 Communal Colleges, and 8 Colleges under private patronage. In 1909 the Athenæums had 6,047 pupils, the Communal Colleges 724, and the patronized 1,133. The Athenées, or Athenæums, which are called Royal, because they are under the direct patronage of the King, are the nearest approach to the British Grammar School. Classics and mathematics form part of the regular curriculum, and it is assumed that most of the scholars will proceed to one of the Universities.

The majority of the pupils are non-resident, but the masters are allowed to take in boarders. The twenty Athénées are situated at Antwerp, Malines, Brussels, Ixelles, Louvain, Bruges, Ostend, Ghent, Ath, Charleroy, Chimay, Mons, Tournai, Huy, Liège, Verviers, Hasselt, Tongres, Arlon, and Namur.

In 1907 the State contributed \$862,229.40, and the communes \$434,289.80 towards secondary education.

Superior or High education in Belgium is given at the four Universities: Ghent, Liège, Brussels, and Louvain, the two first named being State, and the latter Free Universities. Special Schools are attached to the Universities, but these are more important at the State Universities than the others. The following are the number of the students in 1908-09, distinguishing between the regular faculties and the Special Schools:

Name of University	Faculties	Schools	Total
Ghent .....	443	640	1,083
Liège .....	1,670	970	2,640
Brussels .....	845	369	1,214
Louvain .....	2,075	250	2,325
Grand Totals.....	5,033	2,229	7,262

It may be mentioned that at Ghent the principal special course is for Civil Engineering, at Liège for Mining and Electrical Engineering, at Brussels for social and political science, and at Louvain for Theology and Agricultural Science.

Notwithstanding the excellence of its laws on pub-

lic instruction, there is more illiteracy in Belgium than would be expected. Some writers have placed it as high as 30 per cent, but although that is excessive, it is not easy to say what is the correct proportion. It is easier to explain the cause of it. The teachers in the primary schools do not possess sufficient qualifications for their mission, and what is learnt before twelve is very easily forgotten when no subsequent occasion to turn it to account or stimulus to fresh exertions presents itself.

Teachers in the Primary Schools are selected from those who pass through the Secondary Schools, and the selection is made by the Communes. There were in 1908 nineteen normal male and thirty-five normal female establishments, at which there were 2,180 and 2,575 persons of the two sexes in training respectively, as teachers in the Primary Schools. Of these 470 and 563 received the necessary diploma of efficiency in the year named, but the supply far exceeds the demand.

The pay of the school teacher is, according to our ideas, very low. The law stipulates that it shall never be less than \$200 per annum, and leaves everything else in the hands of the commune. The headmaster of a school receives from \$240 a year in a small, to \$480 a year in a large commune. He also has an allowance for a house ranging from \$40 to \$160 per annum. Finally, an annual increment at the rate of \$5 per annum is allowed for a period of twenty-four years.

Although the State does not take an active part in the management of the schools, it exercises a certain control over them by inspection. Subject to the Ministry of the Interior and Education, are District Inspectors who are supposed to visit every school in their district twice a year, and to preside at a meeting of all the teaching staff once a quarter. These officials receive a salary of from \$600 to \$900 a year. Above these are nine chief Inspectors, one for each Province, at a salary of \$1,500 per annum. They are supposed to visit every school once in two years, and they report direct to the Minister in Brussels.

A few words may be said in conclusion about a certain number of special educational institutions which do not come under the regular routine of the educational laws. These exist for technical training purposes.

There are sixty-eight commercial schools run by different communes with an attendance (in 1908) of 4,950; 183 free schools with an attendance of 19,004. There are eighty-one industrial schools subject to the communes with an attendance of 23,418, and eight free, attended by 1,686 students. Special schools of a higher grade are to be found at Antwerp, Liège, Mons, and Ghent. Among them may be named the Superior Commercial Institute and the St. Ignatius Institute, both at Antwerp, the High Commercial Schools at Liège and Louvain, both intended for training consular agents, the Manufacturers' School

at M<sup>o</sup>ns, and different technical schools of minor importance at Ghent (brewing and distilling), Verriers (textiles), and Virton (arts and trades). There are also seventy-nine schools for special training in household work and duties with an inscribed list of 2,865 attending. In addition to the schools there are 195 special household classes with an attendance of 6,947 attached to different elementary schools.

There are two special schools for military education. They are the Ecole Militaire in Brussels, and the School of Cadets at Namur. The former is far the more important, and the scholars number on an average 240. Formerly it was located in the old Abbey of the Cambre near the Bois of that name, but the position was unhealthy, and a fine new school near the Parc du Cinquantaire and the Avenue de Ter-vueren now accommodates the scholars, who wear a military uniform. On State occasions the Ecole Militaire take the lead of all the troops present.

The Cadets School at Namur dates only from 1897, and there were, in 1908-09, 108 civil and eighty-three military cadets on its list. The military cadets supply the army with non-commissioned officers, and the civil cadets are supposed to be intended for some branch of the public service.

In the same way, it does not follow that all the cadets at the Ecole Militaire enter the army. The educational course there being highly esteemed, many parents decide to send their sons to this school in

preference to an *Athenée*, the tone of the place being higher. But the best of all the schools in Belgium is that kept by the Jesuit order in Brussels, near the Palais de Justice. Only Catholics of good family are received, and the order aims at turning out gentlemen as well as scholars. In the same way, the highest class schools for young ladies are those attached to Convents. One of the most famous of these is at St. Hubert.

Special schools exist for educating the blind and deaf mutes. In 1908 there were in the kingdom 3,218 of the former and 4,036 of the latter, and with comparatively few exceptions they are returned as susceptible of receiving instruction. Of these 1,145 males and 972 females were receiving primary education in nineteen schools endowed by the State. Finally, there are three training-schools for the mercantile marine. They are at Ostend, Antwerp, and Nieuport with 160, ninety-five, and eight pupils respectively in 1908. A training-ship has also been commissioned, but its cruises are somewhat rare, and since the mishap to the training-ship *Smet de Naeyer*, named after a recent Premier, there has been a lull in the effort to endow Belgium with the cadre for a navy.

Free public or popular libraries exist in many of the communes. There are 913 libraries in the 2,629 communes. There were nearly 3,322,644 readers, and 1,535,523 volumes were borrowed. These figures do



not include the returns of the Brussels Library, which corresponds to our British Museum. In 1908, 40,997 persons used the reading-room, these showing an average daily attendance of 137. In addition 1,245 students attended the MSS. room, and 8,956 persons made use of the room set aside for periodicals.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

THE laws of Belgium are contained in a collection called the "*Codes Belges*." They are a sort of grafting of the old laws of the Nine Provinces on the Code Napoléon which was effected under the charge of a special commission, appointed after the establishment of national rule. The commission completed its labors in the year 1835, when the Codes were published. Of course, many new laws have been added since, but the principles laid down in the first statute-book have never been departed from. For instance, capital punishment remains on the statute, and murderers are still sentenced to death in Belgian courts, although no one has been executed for over half a century.

We are rather given to say in this country that everything is decided by precedent, but in Belgium the adherence to rule is even more strict. The highest of all the Courts in Belgium, that is the Cour de Cassation, has indeed no other rôle than to supervise judgments, and see how far they conform with the principles and penalties laid down in the Code. Only when a Minister of State has to be tried is the Cour de Cassation used as a Court of open trial. This

Court consists of only one judge, who has under him a body of revisors, and the President of the Court enjoys the position of being the best-paid judge in Belgium, with a salary of \$4,000 per annum. The salaries of the judges is evidence of the low scale on which salaries run in Belgium. A Judge of Appeal gets \$2,000 a year. A Juge de Paix, <sup>place</sup> of whom there are 222 in the country, receives from \$800 to \$1,100 per annum.

For civil justice there are three Appeal Courts or groups of courts in the country. They are at Brussels, Ghent, and Liège respectively, and dependent on these are the Juge de Paix courts, each of which marks a canton. Reporting to the Brussels Courts are eighty-three cantons, to Ghent sixty-five, and to Liège seventy-four. Immediately under the three Appeal Courts are the Courts of First Instance, in which all civil cases are heard before they can be carried to the Appeal Courts. Statistics show that about one case in eight reaches the Appeal Court. These Courts of First Instance are to be found in all the towns of importance and number twenty-six for the whole kingdom. They are supplemented by tribunals of commerce in Antwerp, Ghent, and Liège. In 1908 there were 517 commercial failures and 390 distrains of goods.

In the last-mentioned cases the object of the Juge de Paix is to arrange the matter to the satisfaction of everybody, and this explains why 80 per cent of the

cases are settled without a formal judgment being given. Criminal cases are tried before three orders of courts—Assize, Correctional, and Police Courts.

Here again the same desire to inflict moderate penalties and thus to prevent bad blood between the accusers, the accused, and their relations may be discovered in the large number of fines imposed, which in the police courts rarely exceed one dollar. There has been a marked diminution in the amount of crime in Belgium. Sixty years ago the average number of persons sentenced to death was forty in each year, and they were executed into the bargain. Today the extreme cases average five a year, but it must be remembered that commutation in these instances does not mean to ordinary imprisonment for life, but to perpetual seclusion and silence.

There are two classes of prisons, distinguished as central and secondary. In the former, the principal of which are at Louvain and Ghent, the number of prisoners of both sexes undergoing a term of imprisonment at the end of 1908 was 734. It is not at all easy to analyze the returns of the secondary prisons through which the great majority pass in and out every few days. The average population on any day in 1908 is given at 3,797 men and 378 women. About 140 boys and girls were detained in reformatories, and there are agricultural colonies for those who are deemed reclaimable. The most noteworthy of these establishments is at Merxplas in the north

of Belgium, where the detained, some 2,000 in number, are allowed their liberty within a certain area.

There are two institutions in Belgium of a quasi-judicial character that claim mention. They are the "Depôts de Mendicité" and the "Maisons de Refuge." The distinction is one well worth imitating in this country. The "Maisons de Refuge" are shelters provided for the really deserving poor and "out of work," who through no fault of their own have no home to sleep in, and are in danger of starvation. There is no legal disadvantage or penalty in the eyes of the law in having been the inmate of a "Maison de Refuge." It is for "the wrecks of the high road" and those who have gone under in the battle of life.

It is otherwise with the "Depôts de Mendicité," which are the receptacles for the professional and worthless beggar, the man who has made his livelihood out of begging. The official definition of those consigned to a dépôt is "able-bodied individuals who instead of working for their sustenance seek the aid of the charitable as professional beggars, or those who through laziness, drunkenness, and debauchery live in a condition of vagabondage." Felons sentenced to less than a year's imprisonment may on release from prison be consigned to a dépôt. In plain English the Belgian law differentiates clearly between those in need and those who beg through laziness and aversion to work. The average daily population of the dépôts was 5,421 in 1908, and of the Maisons de Refuge 1,279. The

student who wishes to compare the social condition of different countries may profitably study the returns of our workhouse population in contrast with these figures.

The judges are chosen from the members of the bar, who are called "avocats" or barristers. They are appointed by the King, are practically irremovable, but in cases of misconduct or mental incapacity can be deprived of their office by the unanimous vote of their brother judges. Such a case does not appear to have arisen.

Barristers are recruited from students who have taken the degree of Doctor of Laws at one of the universities, and who then notify their intention to plead in the courts. The fees for admission to the bar are little more than nominal. Barristers do not work in the Juge de Paix Courts. Their principal practice is in the Appeal Courts and the Tribunaux de Commerce. On the criminal side they appear in the Assize and Correctional Courts alone. The fees are small, but the leaders in the Appeal Courts receive payments approximating to our own scale. One of the best-paid posts open to the bar is that of Procureur du Roi, that is, Crown Prosecutor, and as the work is heavy and the holder of the substantial appointment may be otherwise engaged, he has the right to name a substitute among his brother barristers. To simplify the transaction of business a list is kept at each court of barristers eligible to act as Procureurs du Roi.

Although a barrister may be instructed by his client direct, and it is usual to do so, there are also solicitors in Belgium. They are called *avoués*. They must have taken a degree in law at one of the universities, and obtained a diploma authorizing them to practice their profession. It is not very easy to understand how the *avoué* obtains a sufficiency of work, seeing that the most profitable functions of the profession are discharged by the "notaire." This may explain why there are so few *avoués* and these only in the most important cities.

But the notaire is everywhere. He is the indispensable man of business, through whom every one in Belgium possessing any property at all transacts his or her affairs. His public duties consist exclusively of receiving and confirming affidavits. To that extent he is a Commissioner of Oaths; the civil marriage is also performed in his presence at the Hotel de Ville, or the Maison Communale. But the bulk of his work is done as agent or representative for his clients, and it is very profitable work, the general opinion being that a notaire ought to make a fair retiring fortune in twenty years. Many decayed estates among the provincial noblesse have been restored by marriage with the daughter of a notaire.

The notaire is also the man of business. All sales and purchases of estates and house property are effected through him. He generally keeps the family deeds and securities, and as branches of banks are very

rare in Belgium, he is to a large extent the local banker, always it must be understood for his clients alone and not for the public at large. While the notaire discharges certain legal business, he is not a man of the law, and holds no legal degree or other qualification. He is a man of business and finance. It is not easy to ascertain the exact number of notaires, but there is at least one for each canton, and in great cities there are, of course, as many as think they can find a living. As a rule, a Belgian will only go to law after he has first consulted his notaire on the subject at issue. The notaires as a body are highly honorable men, but sometimes the handling of their clients' money induces them to speculate on the bourse, and when they come to grief there is almost as much suffering as arises from the failure of a savings bank here.

/5 The machinery of the law in Belgium for civil actions is simple and far from costly to put in motion. The number of cases entered also proves that the people are by no means averse to litigation, and for some time past complaints have been rife as to the law's delay. The large number of cases not reached at the end of each year is proof that the courts are overworked. This result is tending to diminish the eagerness formerly shown in going to law, and much of the work that now falls on *avocats* and *avoués* is done in attempting to arrive at settlements out of court. The only court which shows an increasing amount of busi-



ness is the divorce court. In Belgium, civil marriage being the legal one, the courts can dissolve the marriage tie without the intervention of the Church.

On the criminal side of justice the tendency is to minimize rather than exaggerate the gravity of an offense. This remark does not apply to the old offender, and it may even be held that he does not get much consideration. To have offended once against the law is regarded almost as proof positive of guilt in regard to any fresh charge. In Belgium every citizen is on the register of the Etat Civil at the Hotel de Ville of a city, or the Maison Communale of a commune. In addition to this registration all persons employed in domestic service or in shops and restaurants are supplied by the police with a little book called indifferently "livret" or "carnet," in which not merely their names and family history are given, but also all changes of employment. These books have to be shown at the postoffice with each change of place, and as the last employer inscribes the reason for leaving, there is a complete history of the individual's life with information as to his or her character. In any dispute or trouble with an employee, the very first question the police agent asks is, "Give me your livret." The servant has a bad time and will be certainly fined if neglect has been shown in keeping up the record.

The agents de police, who are only to be found in the great cities, are an admirable body of men, and if

we omit the qualification of regulating street traffic, in which they have no experience, need not fear comparison with any other civil force in the world. They carry a small sword in a leather sheath, but it is very rarely drawn, practically speaking never in the daytime save on the occasion of Socialist disorders. At night they also carry a revolver, but except in notoriously bad quarters, like the rue Haute in Brussels, armed collisions rarely occur. As all foreigners have to notify their presence in Belgium through their landlords to the police, it naturally follows that criminals from other countries try to evade this regulation, and resort to possible devices for the purpose.

The police have an ingenious way of running down these evaders of the law. The agents report from their several beats that they have noticed some suspicious-looking persons about whom they did not know by sight. Note is made of the fact at the central bureau, and about the same time information comes, generally from Paris or Lille, that some notorious criminals have disappeared from those places. Thereupon the Brussels police organize a night hunt (it is called a "rafle" or "sweeping off") and in the small hours of the morning they descend upon the drinking and sleeping places favored by the thieving fraternity, and arrest all those whose papers are not in order, or who, in the case of foreigners, have not a "permis de sejour." In this way many criminals are traced who were not known to be in the country.

The agent de police is just as popular with all law-abiding citizens in Belgium as the police are with us, and this is the best proof that he does not abuse his authority. He never thinks of interfering with the respectable citizen whom he seems to appraise intuitively, but he has the eyes of a lynx for a member of the criminal classes. I have seen instances of this in the park at Brussels, where a great crowd assembles in summer afternoons to hear the music. Hundreds of people will be seated on the chairs under the shade of the trees behind which on a raised terrace is the bandstand. A solitary agent walks up the gravel path at a fair pace. One would imagine his thoughts were with his family and not his work, when suddenly he slackens his pace, looks fixedly at one of the seats, and just raises his little finger. A woman gets up shamefacedly and walks out of the park. She is a well-known pickpocket, let us say, but perhaps no one else has seen the occurrence. The Brussels "agent" has a fine "flair" for his professional duty, and is very much to be admired in his simple uniform of black broadcloth and smart kepi.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

**I**N proportion to the size of her territory and the number of her people the commercial activity of Belgium can only be described as immense. But it is sometimes classed greater than it really is, owing to the statistics on the subject requiring explanation. Belgium, owing to its geographical position, forms part of the transport route for goods to and from other countries. The transit charges benefit Belgian railways, but the articles conveyed have nothing to do with either the national resources or the commercial activity of Belgium.

In 1908 Belgium's own exports amounted to about \$565,400,000, and her imports to \$501,280,000.

These figures represent the true state of Belgian commerce, but in addition it may be stated that the transit trade amounted to \$404,207,000. The three largest contributants to the transit trade in their order of importance were Germany, France, and England.

Returning now to the country's own proper trade, we find that in the matter of imports France comes first, Germany second, and England third, whereas in exports Germany takes the first place, and France only the second. In imports the United States, Ar-

gentina, and Holland occupy the next places, the first named being not much below this country. In exports Holland stands fourth, and all the other countries have only low places.

The principal articles of Belgian trade in respect of exports, confining the list to those reaching a total value of not less than five million dollars in the year 1908, are the following:

(1) Foods of all kinds, Vegetables included.....	\$53,009,400
(2) Iron and Steel, manufactured.....	29,461,000
(3) Other Metals .....	30,698,800
(4) Leather and Hides.....	24,651,200
(5) Cotton, Linen, etc.....	27,468,000
(6) Engines and Machines.....	38,713,400
(7) Minerals (unwrought).....	16,238,800
(8) Raw material (textiles).....	38,630,000
(9) Raw material (animal).....	12,636,400
(10) Rubber, raw and manufactured.....	11,047,000
(11) Arms .....	5,220,600
(12) Horses (26,012 in number).....	5,948,200
(13) Paper .....	6,467,000
(14) Stone .....	8,127,200
(15) Chemicals .....	11,532,200
(16) Resin and bitumen.....	9,722,800
(17) Tissues .....	18,197,000
(18) Glassware .....	13,779,000
(19) Dyes and Colors.....	7,372,500

The exports of coal and coke from Belgium are balanced by a slightly larger import. The exact figures being:

#### EXPORTED

Coal, 4,754,000 tons.....	Value \$16,260,000
Coke, 917,000 tons.....	" 4,476,200

#### IMPORTED

Coal (including briquettes), 5,589,209 tons, Value \$19,169,600	
Coke, 287,037 " "	1,400,800

The receipts from customs are shown in the following table:

Year	1850	1860	1870	1880
	\$2,220,800	\$3,152,200	\$5,712,200	\$5,121,600
	1890	1900	1908	
	\$6,353,200	\$10,236,400	\$11,465,400	

Up to 1886 the receipts were on a free trade tariff; after that year protection became the State policy. Wine pays no import duty since 1887. On the other hand, it is subject to a heavy excise, part of which is attributed to the communal revenue. In 1908 the excise brought in a total sum of \$22,828,400, of which amount \$6,135,800 was handed over to the communes, leaving \$16,692,600 for the State. The State, therefore, derives nearly six millions sterling from customs and excise, and in addition there is about \$6,000,000 for local expenditure from excise.

The following table shows the principal occupations, omitting agriculture, mines, and metal factories already treated of in other chapters, of the population in 1896 which gives the latest classified returns:

Textiles .....	169,778	persons
Clothing .....	137,966	"
Building .....	93,577	"
Food .....	90,443	"
Wood, Furniture, etc.....	88,457	"
Hides and Leather.....	57,702	"
Conveyance .....	41,873	"
Specialized industries.....	24,435	"
Glass .....	22,797	"
Chemicals .....	20,715	"
Book trade.....	14,049	"
Tobacco .....	12,034	"
Paper .....	9,448	"
China Ware.....	28,977	"

The hours of labor at these industries range from eight to twelve hours a day. The following table dealing with a total of 504,304 (410,279 men and 94,025 women) shows—

			Number
Working	8	hours per day	19,138
"	8 to 9	"	34,741
"	9 to 10	"	172,012
"	10 to 10½	"	77,854
"	10½ to 11	"	88,166
"	11 to 11½	"	70,898
"	11½ to 12	"	30,951
"	12	"	10,544
Total			504,304

The bulk of the industrial population work, therefore, between nine and twelve hours a day.

Joint-stock Companies in Belgium are regulated by the law of May 18, 1873, which was modified and amplified by that of May 22, 1886. In 1908 there were 1,365 such companies, and in 1909 the total had increased to 1,500. They are classified in the following list, but the amount of capital invested in them is not stated:

Assurances	28
Banks and Finance	87
Commercial	499
Industrial	653
Telephone and Electric	24
Shipping	13
Light Railways	1
Tramways	3
Transport	24
Public Works	66
Unspecified	102
	<hr/> 1,500

The industrial population has a higher proportion to the rest in Hainaut than in any of the nine provinces, and stands lowest in Luxemburg and Limburg. The totals in each province and the ratio to the whole of the industrial class are as follows—those engaged in the mines and factories being included:

Hainaut .....	269,300	or	23.83	per cent
Liège .....	190,000	or	16.81	"
Brabant .....	185,200	or	16.39	"
East Flanders .....	171,000	or	15.13	"
West Flanders.....	109,500	or	9.69	"
Antwerp .....	109,200	or	9.66	"
Namur .....	55,800	or	4.94	"
Luxemburg ..	20,400	or	1.82	"
Limburg .....	19,600	or	1.73	"
Totals.....	1,130,000	or	100	per cent

The great commercial activity of Belgium is shown by the heavy work performed by the special courts—Tribunaux de Commerce—dealing with such matters. In 1907-08, the last judicial year dealt with, 59,588 cases were entered for trial. Of these, 31,054 were decided by the Courts, 10,981 were struck out, abandoned or arranged, and 17,753 were not reached.

There remains to give some particulars of Belgium's national debt. The first loan was raised in 1832 at 5 per cent, and since 1840 it has increased from \$51,166,224 to \$687,383,570. In addition to this consolidated debt the State issues as occasion requires Treasury Bonds. This floating debt amounted in 1908 to \$33,902,000. With the exception of one old loan, bearing only 2½ per cent interest, the debt is at the uniform rate of 3 per cent. The total in-



debtedness of Belgium in 1908, therefore, was \$721,285,570. This would have seemed an incredible burden to the Belgians of 1830 or even 1860. The service of the debt, interest and sinking fund, required \$33,376,660 in 1907. The main asset against the debt apart from the interests of the State is the railways, which showed a profit to the Government of forty million francs or \$8,000,000 in 1907. The price of Belgian Consols in 1908 ranged from 92.25 to 96 per cent, averaging 94. The  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent averaged 80.20. Before the Socialist troubles in 1892 Belgian Consols averaged 101 or 102.

In addition to the State debt there is that of the Provinces and Communes. In 1908 this amounted to an existing total of \$7,361,544, but between 1830 and 1880 the Communes had borrowed \$116,282,934. As the loans are for short periods and are frequently amortized, the provincial debt is in a continuous state of flux and change. A large part of the debt went in the construction of schools after the new Education Act placed their control in the hands of the Communes.

## CHAPTER XIX

### LITERATURE AND JOURNALISM

**I**N one particular modern Belgium presents a striking contrast to the mediæval States that filled its place, and the contrast is in this instance based on progress. The Flemish communes represented the summit of industrial and financial success and prosperity, but theirs was a material and not an intellectual triumph. The age of Van Artevelde disclosed no literary genius. The Burgundian period was sterile in the field of letters, save for a few chroniclers who wrote in French, like Froissart and Commines, and whose achievements in the field of letters were done in Paris and not in Ghent or Brussels. It is true that the Flemish Text Society unearthed some mediæval ballads in Flemish, of which no one outside Flanders had ever heard, but these, however interesting and suggestive, could never have been regarded as of sufficient importance to constitute a literature. It is also the fact that Willems thought he had discovered an original Flemish version of the famous Renard le Fox, and trumpeted it abroad as a proof of early Flemish literary genius. A little examination sufficed to show that it was nothing more than a Flemish translation from the French.

If the Flemings produced nothing remarkable in the way of literature during their political and industrial prime, they certainly did nothing during the three dark centuries that preceded the French occupation to establish a claim to intellectual pre-eminence. They had their schools of rhetoric, in which students were incited to declaim some of the old national ballads and thus save them from dying a natural death by being forgotten. But one fails to find any evidence of even literary interest. All the energy of the race was absorbed in the effort to keep alive and not to disappear from the family of nations. It is one of the wonders of history that a Belgian nationality, retaining its two component parts in the Flemish and Walloon communities, both at least 1,200 years old, should have survived to emerge as a single and stable State in the nineteenth century. The mind of the race was oppressed with the hard facts of its position; it had no time to indulge in flights of the imagination. The foreign yoke was so overwhelming that neither the patriot nor the poet could raise himself to such a flight of fancy as to imagine deliverance within the range of possibility.

It is consequently all the more remarkable that the attainment of her independence should have been followed in Belgium by one of the most striking literary revivals that Europe witnessed in the nineteenth century. In subjection her voice had not been heard, but on the morrow of her liberation she became articulate.

The first manifestation of literary genius came from Flanders. It was no doubt evoked by the aspersion cast on the Flemish tongue by those who assumed too confidently that French would be the language of the new State. Besides, the Walloon section of the nation enjoyed the possession of French literature, a satisfying repast for the Belgian public before, in a later generation, it furnished a stimulus to fresh and original exertions of their own.

Reference has been made in the chapter on The Two Races of Belgium to the works of Henri Conscience and Ledeganck, the Walter Scott and Byron, as they are called, of Flanders. These men of genius proved that, although Flemish might be in the phrase of a French writer "one of those languages that have had troubles," it was still a tongue in which the noblest thoughts of humanity could find expression. Ledeganck, although an ardent Fleming, was intensely national. He was all for the large Belgium, which included the brother people. Conscience was more pronouncedly Flemish. He had taken on his shoulders the propagandist rôle bequeathed by Willems, but under his direction Antwerp superseded Ghent as the center of the movement. Here Conscience founded a school which not merely exists, but gives abundant proof of activity today. Antwerp even produced its own poet as a rival to Ledeganck in Van Beers, who may be compared to Shelley or Keats. Other leaders of the Antwerp school were Theodore Van Ryswyck

(father of the late burgomaster of Antwerp, who was one of the most brilliant of public orators), Pol de Mont and the Sisters Loveling. The last-named ladies were contemporaries of George Eliot and wrote somewhat in her style.

It might have been expected that this literary activity would have exhausted itself with the first impressionist movement, and that the leaders would have found no successors capable of giving the movement a fresh impetus. The national spirit that glorified the deeds of the Flemish communes could not but exhaust itself with the recitation of the deeds themselves. They did not admit of repetition. The first writers had appropriated and worked out the subject. Under such conditions it would not have been surprising if the Flemish literary movement, after blazing up, had burnt itself out. It was its striking feature that it experienced a second revival. What Conscience and Ledeganck did in the first phase, Maeterlinck and Verhaeren achieved in the second.

Maurice Maeterlinck, a student and then a professor at Ghent University, revealed himself to the world about twenty-five years ago. He wrote in Flemish, and his theme was not the narrow one of Flemish aspirations, but the broad and limitless one of human nature and human passion. Just as the theme was so wide, did he find Flemish too narrow and confined as the implement of his labor. He abandoned Flemish for French, and he left Ghent for Paris, thus

consummating what might be called by his fellow citizens "the grand treason."

Like Conscience and Ledeganck, Maeterlinck had his affinity and complement in Emile Verhaeren. Twin stars shone together at each epoch in the Flemish firmament. Maeterlinck, as his "Douze Chansons" well proves, indulged his genius in the play of poetry, but was at heart romanticist, philosopher, and moralist. Verhaeren, who condescended at times to the use of prose, was essentially poet. In him the Flemish landscape, the bare bleak sea-driven stretch of the dunes, the mirage-like fields of the polders, found their Wordsworth, with more than Wordsworth's force, and a daring in word pictures where he was timid. "Les campagnes hallucinées," "Les vagues des dunes," "Toute la Flandre," will prevent critics from pronouncing dull and uninteresting those lands of Flanders whose mystery he has fathomed and of which he offers the reader the key in his melodious verse, seemingly produced without more effort than a human sigh. But Emile Verhaeren, too, appeals to the wider public he can reach through the medium of the French language. The ambition of the individual in both these illustrious cases has proved too strong for the separatist inclinations of the born Fleming. In literature it is not true to say that it is more satisfying to be king in one's own village than an ordinary citizen of Rome.

If the Flemings provided what may be called the

first sensations in Belgian literary activity, the Walloon movement which followed at an interval, has been scarcely less significant or meritorious. The Walloon writers of the three troubled periods—the Brabant Revolution of 1789, the transition period after the fall of the Empire in 1814, and the Belgian Revolution of 1830-31—were among the most prolific and active pamphleteers that have ever been known. "Shoot me some of those pamphleteers," exclaimed an irritated Austrian Minister in 1789, and it would be difficult to discover a publicist who did more in preparing a revolution with the pen than Louis de Potter before 1830. The pamphleteer is only the historian in embryo whose mission will not allow of his waiting to write *in extenso*. It was, therefore, only natural that the establishment of peace should be followed by a marked development of historical study, elucidation and description. There was a natural explanation for this. Belgium had just been born, but although a new kingdom, it was an old country, and history had to be searched and described to explain the tardiness of its birth. It was under these circumstances that Gachard, Schayes, T. Juste, Kerwyn de Lettenhove, Villenfagne, and others too numerous to name, explored the recesses of Belgian history, and set forth the sad national experiences of the hardest treated race in Western Europe. Vanderkindère, one of the latest and the ablest of these searchers after truth, has informed his countrymen in a bitter sen-

tence that they could not expect to come back from those wanderings in subterranean regions without some of their plumage being burnt, and something of their <sup>original</sup> pristine virtue left behind.

If Flemish writers produced the romance and poetry of the nation, it was the French-speaking community that provided the historians, the political writers, and the scientists. They were a band of highly meritorious scholars and Teachers, although none reached the higher level of genius. They had none of the stimulus provided by a definite mission of political or racial propaganda. Their principal object was to unearth historical documents, to group them in a harmonious whole, so as to convince the world that Belgium had existed with an almost unbroken thread of national life from the olden time. Their subject alone was interesting in their eyes. It never occurred to them that there was need to establish the superiority of prose set down in French to that expressed in Flemish, or to prove the greater fertility of Walloon intellect to that of the men of Flanders. The idea of comparison, competition, and contrast never entered their minds.

But the Flemish movement had always been aggressive in its character, and it was scarcely surprising that the productions of several men whose real genius could not be challenged in any assembly of intellect, should have imparted some measure of arrogance to the Flemish attitude towards the other race in the



Union. It became a favorite phrase in the Flemish papers to declare that the Walloon intellect was sterile, and that it was satisfied to let France provide it with such literature as it might require. The Flemish attitude was provocative and a challenge. It gave rise to the Walloon movement which, in its way, has proved as remarkable as the Flemish, and may still be regarded as in the full swing of its vigor.

7 The Walloon movement has been double-winged. There has been a general effort, and it is still in progress, to preserve and revive the Walloon tongue, which is as old as the Flemish, and which was in use at the Court of Pepin and probably of Charlemagne. The other side of the movement has been to enrich French literature by the great achievements of more than a few Walloon writers. Liège, the capital of Walloonie, took the lead in this movement just as naturally as Ghent and Antwerp had done in regard to the Flemish. Defrecheux and Vrindts supplied the Walloons with the popular ballads that the Flemings found in Ledeganck and Van Beers. More even than their Flemish colleagues are these singers the poets of the people. The poems of Vrindts, for instance, give in epitome the life of the stout Walloon race which has preserved its national characteristics amid the rivalry of the Empires by which Liège was surrounded.

While the movement at Liège remained pre-eminently and distinctively Walloon, the second

branch of the reaction against Flemish arrogance and aggression concentrated its forces in Brussels. The Belgian capital became the center of the revival of national literature, expressed in the French tongue. The movement cannot be traced here in all its details. The first writers like Van Hasselt were swayed by the influence of Victor Hugo. The second and more numerous group, of which Camille Lémonnier, Georges Rôdenbach, and Edmond Picard were the bright and particular stars, were largely influenced by the naturalistic tendencies of the modern French school. Poets such as Giraud, Gilkin, Mockel, and Severin have proved that the Belgian mind can soar to the heights of Parnassus, while M. Chainaye, a strenuous fighter against the aggressions of the "Mouvement Flammingant," has gone to the root of things in his "L'Ame des Choses." M. Maurice Wilmotte, less partisan than Chainaye, has taken his place as a leader of the French movement by his captivating sketch of the moral and political aspects of independent Belgium.

Of all these writers, however, one alone, it may be admitted, has passed the final test of literary fame, the acquisition of a European reputation, Camille Lémonnier. He is one of the finest stylists in any language, and his prose reads with the lilt of a song. For that reason translations of his best works are impossible. Those that have been attempted read harsh, and his metaphors defy transference to another scene. This

is especially the case in his description of the Borinage and in his great novel "Le Mâle." The brutalities and coarseness of industrial life have never been brought out with a bolder hand, while behind them are portrayed the blurred features of our common humanity. Walloon as he is, Lemonnier has done full justice to Flanders in his "Contes Flamandes" and his monumental sketch of "La Belgique," which developed out of his contributions to *Le Monde Illustré*. Enough has been done by this chosen band of "Young Belgium" to show that there is no truth in the Flemish aspersion as to the sterility of Walloon intellect; and it may even be predicted that the French revival in Belgium, having a wider audience, is likely to prove more enduring than the Flemish. Some proof of this might be found in the abandoning of Flemish for French by the two leading writers of Flanders.

Belgium possesses a very active and influential press. The papers published at Antwerp and Ghent are printed in Flemish, and those in Brussels, Liège, and Louvain in French. Of course, there are a few French papers in Flanders and a few Flemish in Brussels, but the rule is as mentioned. The principal rôle of each paper is to advocate the cause of the political party to which it adheres, and the original matter is confined to political <sup>organizing</sup> propaganda. Political views in Belgium are extreme—there is no Central Party—and the press does not lag behind the demagogue in giving the freest vent to vituperation of the

adversary. The rival party is denounced as devoid of all virtue, and as no moderation is expected from the other side, it is deemed weak to display it oneself. When the Belgian journalist becomes tired of attacking his own countrymen, he relieves his feelings by criticizing the people of other countries. The Second Empire was one of its favorite butts, so was England during the South African War. But during the last two years there has been evidence of greater restraint. The general European situation has inspired anxiety, and Belgian publicists have displayed a proper sense of their higher duties and responsibilities.

In Brussels there are several excellent dailies. The *Indépendance Belge*, the *Journal de Bruxelles*, and the *Etoile Belge* are all first-class papers to which able writers contribute. They also receive official information, and endeavor to instruct their readers as well as to promote the cause of the political party to which they are attached. M. Roland de Marès of the *Indépendance* is a publicist of European reputation. Among specialist papers the military weekly, *La Belgique Militaire*, takes a foremost place. Under the able editorship of M. Léon Chomé, it has advocated the cause of army reform during the last thirty years, and is entitled to much of the credit for the changes brought about in the system of army recruitment.

The periodical press is of a somewhat spasmodic character. An incident or the commencement of a commercial movement will be heralded by the produc-

tion of an illustrated journal or magazine, and for a time a very interesting periodical appears. The incident passes off, the movement fizzles out, whereupon the publication is dropped. Such was the case of *La Chine et Sibérie* a few years back. The Congolese publications have also diminished in number. Among all the periodicals the most valuable is the Journal of the Royal Society of Belgium. In this have appeared the best works of historical writers like Gachard, Pirenne, Borchgrave, etc.

Closely connected with literature and journalism is the literary club. In Brussels there is a rather exclusive club located in the Park (near Vauxhall), known as the "Cercle Artistique et Littéraire," but beyond allowing an occasional conference or exhibition of pictures in its rooms it does not take a very active part in promoting either the status or the interests of literature. The Cercle Africain, held at the picturesque Hotel Ravenstein, is nominally intended for the use of those who have served in Africa, but it has a literary side also, and is the center of the propagandist movement in Colonial matters which finds expression in the *Congo Illustré*. As a rule, however, *cercles* or clubs meet at their chosen restaurant, and in this sense there is scarcely a town in Belgium without its little society. It would be more correct to say that each town has two rival "cercles," the Catholic and the Liberal, thus reflecting in social life the political divisions of the State.

## CHAPTER XX

### MUSIC, ART, AND THE DRAMA

WHATEVER else he may be or may not be, the Belgian is intensely fond of music. Concerts are the most popular form of entertainment. There is not a commune that does not keep up a band or rather two, for there are pretty certain to be rival Catholic and Liberal bands wherever one goes, and in no other country are greater facilities provided by the Government for those desirous of studying vocal or instrumental music in any form. There seems to be an average of not fewer than 20,000 permanent students passing through the conservatories at any given time. State help is given to these institutions because public opinion demands it, and not with the object of spreading a love of music. The love of music is a national trait. The Government is, therefore, expected to provide those who wish to earn their living by the profession with the suitable means and facilities of becoming experts and *virtuosi*. *one has a taste for fine arts collection of fine arts or collection*

The four royal conservatories are situated in Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, and Liège. Each institution is divided into classes covering the whole range of harmony, and at Antwerp and Ghent there are separate classes for French and Flemish declamation. The

following table shows the total of inscribed students at each of these institutions in 1908:

Name	Male Students	Female Students	Total
Antwerp .....	949	978	1,927
Brussels .....	481	405	886
Ghent .....	580	601	1,181
Liège .....	742	461	1,203
Grand Total.....			5,197

In addition to the four royal conservatories there are sixty-five other conservatories and schools of music in the country. Of these fifty-six are in Hainaut, Brabant, and Flanders. The total of inscribed students was 14,115 (7,033 males and 7,082 females). Among the famous musicians turned out by the Belgian schools of music may be named César Franck and Ysaye, whose reputations are European. The chief merit lies, however, in turning out annually a large number of qualified musicians of all kinds whose influence on the life of the country and the character of its people is not inconsiderable.

The opera is very popular in Brussels, and has a particularly long season at the Theatre de la Monnaie. During the three months that the opera house is closed the orchestra plays in the open air every evening at Vauxhall, in the Bois, except when it rains. The conductors are doctors of music who have qualified at one of the royal conservatories, and the orchestra is now recruited exclusively from the national schools of music. There are fine concert halls in Brussels besides the hall of the Conservatoire, which is sit-

uated in the rue de la Régence. One of these is in the room called La Grande Harmonie, at the top of the rue de la Madeleine. Great interest is taken in the competition among the students of the Conservatoires, but on these occasions only the parents or other near relatives to the number of two <sup>apiece</sup> are allowed to be present to hear the <sup>concert</sup> ~~concours~~ at which the relative merit of the student is announced. At the repetition, however, it is possible for outsiders to be present, and the search for new talent is not the least practical errand of the visitors who include many impresarios.

Great pride is taken in organizing the communal bands which are composed of trained musicians. They are called out to attend the funeral of any prominent resident, and in the smaller communes any funeral, provided the deceased belonged to the right political party. They thus acquire special skill and harmony in Handel's or Chopin's funeral march. On fête days and national holidays they play popular music in the principal square or "Grand Place," winding up with the national anthem of La Brabançonne. The military bands are also first rate, especially those of the two Guide Cavalry regiments, which are always quartered in Brussels. One of these bands plays in the park every afternoon during the summer. The city band of Brussels also plays there, and throughout the country similar arrangements are carried out in all the garrison towns. Whatever shortcomings he may note, the visitor to Brussels and Belgium will have no rea-



son to complain of a lack of good music. The audience at the Monnaie, while retaining their right to criticism are particularly susceptible to the claims of new-comers of evident talent, and many a famous prima donna dates her first European success from the acclamations of a Belgian audience in their historic theater. The Belgian revolution of 1830 originated with the ebullition of popular enthusiasm aroused by Massanniello's famous song invoking the spirit of patriotism.

Art not less than music enjoys official support.

- 7 The principal institution for the cultivation of the Fine Arts finds its home naturally enough at Antwerp associated with the memories of Rubens and Vandyke. This is styled the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, and dates from the year 1850. All the well-known artists of Belgium in the last half-century have passed through this Academy, and many others as well who have not followed their profession in Belgium. Among the latter the most distinguished is the great Belgian artist, Sir L. <sup>A</sup>lma-Tadema. So far as mere numbers go the institution reached its prime in 1880, when there were as many as 1,692 students as compared with 941 in 1908. The decline seems the more considerable when it is stated that female students were admitted for the first time in 1890.

Besides the Royal Academy at Antwerp there were eighty-six drawing academies and schools in the kingdom attended by 16,137 students of both sexes. Many

of these students are trained as architects, gilders, engravers, etc., as well as those who enter the courses of drawing and painting. There was even a class of naval architects at Antwerp, but this was given up in 1885. So far as the different fine art exhibitions allow of an opinion to be formed from the total numbers of exhibitors there were about 600 painters of the male sex and 100 of the female actively practicing their profession as artist-painters in 1903.

14. The modern school in Belgium, dating from 1835, was chiefly historical. Impressed by the events of the period of liberation, the artists found their inspiration in the incidents of Netherlands' history Biefve, Gallait, DeKeyser were the leaders in the revival of Belgian art, and their historical works are to be found on the walls of the Museum of Modern Art in Brussels. But the interest of such works soon passed off, and for a time Belgian art languished or waned in the choice of a new bent. After some uncertainty a new school of landscape painters, racy of the soil, has  
15 come into existence, making present-day Belgian art a real and living fact. Instead of our own it will be best to give M. Edmond Picard's views on the development of modern Belgian art. They are set forth in the following passage which is taken from one of his lively causeries on "the artistic psychology of Belgium." We may only pretend to give M. Picard's sense and not his style, which baffles the translator's efforts:

19 - "In order to be the artist, to transform one's impressions into the beautiful, it is necessary before everything to be true to one's own home and surroundings; art must be impregnated with national thought, ambition, and tendencies. At the beginning of our history Belgium had no national soul, because the sense of a nationality did not exist. Across that land of mist, where each knew not his neighbor unless it was to combat him, there bloomed no flower of idealism. While in the Greek and Roman civilizations gods walked on earth, while Paganism gave free vent to its streams of eternal beauty, with us all was void. The night, during which intellect with us slept, began to break about the year 1000, when in churches and monasteries the æsthetic awakening was revealed by barbarous and coarse decoration and constructive work which were still expressive of the Roman art. Out of this sprang Gothic art which in emotional force, if not in the power of its harmonious beauty, surpassed Greek art itself. With the House of Burgundy appeared the first form of national unity, thus really creating Belgium, and thenceforth national sentiment found its noblest expression in an independent and original art. The national soul is manifested with striking intensity in the works of Memling and Van Eyck, in which may be found across the centuries the same characteristics as are observable in our art today—the love of the picturesque, the research in detail, the desire to provoke emotion. After the House of Burgundy came the eclipse of our individuality, and with it of our art—the eclipse lasted during nearly three centuries. It may be objected that the reign of Albert and Isabella saw the striking genius of Rubens. But Rubens was not Belgian. He was one of those supernatural men like Shakespeare and Micheal Angelo, who, when they disappear, leave all in darkness after them. And then we arrive at the day of our inde-

pendence. At first our artists seek to follow in the track of Rubens, and we get the mediocre productions of de Keyser and Slingenever. But other artists rose with the courage to look about them. It is in landscape, in the representation of the native soil that the renaissance begins; Artan, Boulenger, Baron and a crowd of others who scatter over their works the light whose marvelous beauty they have appreciated. Then came that great artist Constantin Meunier, whom we may describe as of the school of Quentin Metsys, Laermans who may be compared to Breughel, Alfred Stevens and De Groux to Vermeer and Snyders. All these have created for us a new, striking and vigorous art because they realized that it must be not merely beautiful, but true to our national and familiar life."

2. Modern Belgium can boast of having produced some very fine sculptors, among the principal being Eugène Simonis, the brothers Geefs, Jehoth, Fraikin, and more recently Jacques de Lalaing. The finest product of the art of a Belgian sculptor is undoubtedly the colossal equestrian statue of Godfrey of Bouillon, which occupies the center of the Place Royale. The British Waterloo monument in the Evère cemetery may be mentioned as an original piece of work due to the talent of Count J. de Lalaing.

There is no national theater in Belgium as in France, and up to the present time no special training-school for the stage has been established. The utmost that has been done in any form of State, and that under the pressure of the Flemish party, has been the building of special theaters for Flemish plays at Antwerp, Ghent, and Brussels. After the Monnaie, which

has been referred to as the house for opera, the principal theaters in Brussels are the Parc, the Molière, the Galleries, and the Alhambra. The most fashionable of them is the Parc, where it is usual to give the latest success from Paris with French actors and actresses. Classical plays are given from time to time, and matinées of plays to which young ladies can be taken have recently become the vogue.

If the Parc is the playhouse for society, the Molière, which is also a house for French plays, appeals to a more general public. The theaters in the lower town go in for light comedy, operetta, and burlesque. Their greatest successes are scored when they put on the boards a "risky" piece like "La Dame de chez Maxim." Its success was phenomenal, not greater, however, than that of the drama "Cyrano de Bergerac." If there is a national school of actors in the French tongue, it is still largely in the making, and the Belgian stage must be described as cosmopolitan with a majority of the performers claiming French birth.

It is, of course, different with the Flemish theaters, where the company is necessarily exclusively Belgian. But the Flemish theaters can boast of no large repertoire, and the heroic popular play of "Uylenspiegel" was written originally in French by its author, Charles de Coster. It is, however, a sure draw with the Flemings, for it deals with the heroic period of the communes, and is frequently put on the

stage. As a drama it somewhat resembles the "Dead Heart," but the most remarkable point about it is the opportunity it affords of studying a Flemish audience. The royal theater at Antwerp is used as both an opera house and for plays, but here the language used is French. It resembles the Monnaie with the exception that its season is shorter—September to April—and that it only opens its doors on certain days in the week. The most fashionable audience collects for the Sunday matinées. The Antwerp citizens are more staid than those of Brussels, and their dramatic fare has to be selected accordingly. The Flemish Theater, known as the Schouwburg, may be described as the home of Flemish drama, and sometimes Flemish translations of Shakespeare's plays are put on the stage. At Ghent there is another Flemish Theater also called the Schouwburg, which resembles in character those already described. Near it is the French theater, but its season is short and, as a rule, it only opens its doors twice or thrice a week.

## CHAPTER XXI

### KERMESSES, FETES, AND LEGENDS

2 " THE first buildings of any permanent construction in Belgium were churches, or in the Flemish tongue, "*kerks*"; round these clustered the wattle huts of the people. When trade commenced to occupy the time and attention of the inhabitants of the land, markets, or "*messes*" were held under the church's shadow and protection. The church and the market-place supply the origin of the compound name of "*kermesse*," which has come to mean in the course of centuries, a fair. The Flemings were given to pollity, and they enjoyed themselves in the days of their prosperity with high living, somewhat boisterous games, and "all the fun of the fair." Nor have they changed, as any one may discover by a visit during the Carnival, more especially to Binche on Shrove-Tuesday. *Kermesse* is essentially a Flemish institution, and is not to be met outside of the Flemish-speaking provinces which includes Brabant. In the Walloon part of the country, where "free-thought" and unbelief are alleged to have made great progress, all the popular fêtes have a religious basis, and are immune from the noisy licence that seems to characterize the *kermesse*.

In Brussels no one would discover any difference

between a *kermesse* and an English country fair, and the only matter that appears strange is that a great city should see in its midst the celebration of a country fair with booths, merry-go-rounds, menageries, and stalls for the display of much tinsel and gawds. As each commune of Brussels holds its own *kermesse*, and a fair generally lasts a week, the air seems to be impregnated for a good portion of the summer with their influence, and if one's domestic returns home late or not at all, the cause is alleged to have been the *kermesse*. The fairs are held in some open place, like the Boulevard Jamar, near the "gare du Midi," so as to interfere as little as possible with the general traffic.

The *kermesse* fête of the city of Brussels concentrates its effect on a procession through the streets and boulevards of the lower town to the Grand Place. The famous statuette known as the Mannikin Pis is taken down from its pedestal, dressed up in a fancy costume as a Gard Civique, and paraded in triumph. Gigantic figures of Gog and Magog follow in the cortège at a respectful distance, but all the honors of the day are reserved for the Mannikin, who has been called "the oldest citizen of Brussels." This statue, the work of Duquesnoy, dates from 1619, and is said to be only a freak of its author. The uniform in which it has always been dressed for the fête has changed with each form of government, and its wardrobe now numbers eight separate costumes, the person who has charge of them receiving a salary of \$40 a year.



The most characteristic of all the *kermesses* is that celebrated every year at Binche on Shrove-Tuesday. It has more of the spirit of the old *kermesse* and less of the modern fair than perhaps any other still held in Belgium. Binche is a small town of Hainaut with a population of about 12,000 people, situated about half-way between Mons and Charleroi. As it is situated on a branch line, it is seldom visited by the English tourist. The fêtes of Shrove-Tuesday are said to have originated with Mary of Burgundy, who celebrated them for the first time in the year 1477, on the occasion of her establishing a hunting seat in the neighborhood. They have consequently been held for 433 years. Additions were made under her successors, notably the regents Margaret of Austria and Mary of Hungary; but the fundamental idea of the fête, viz., disguise, was supplied by the young Duchess, who, it may be supposed, proposed it as the only way in which she could take part in it. The consequence is that no one may appear in their ordinary clothes on this occasion. The young men and women of the place appear as Pierrots and Pierrettes, while a special band figures as "Gilles." The precise origin of this name is obscure; by some it is considered a reference to St. George, and by others a term for a silly fellow. But in any case the Gilles of Binche are a select society, and apparently membership is hereditary. The costumes are valuable, and

include a plumed hat which is estimated to cost not less than twenty pounds.

The participants in the fray that follows, for the feature of the affair is the pelting of onlookers at the windows or balconies with oranges instead of confetti, are not merely disguised, but generally put on false noses and hunchbacks. The Gilles Society has its own band, which plays its own special music, and the mad dances of the Gilles and the Pierrots down the long high street to the gardens where the Carnival ball takes place, savors of pandemonium. All the time the dancers are pelting the windows and people in them with the oranges carried in straw baskets. It is not etiquette to pelt any one in the streets, but those in the houses are considered fair game. At Binche one sees the *kermesse* pure and simple combined with the orgy of the Carnival, but free of all the accessories of the fair. It is usual for as many as twenty thousand visitors to come into the place from the neighboring towns of Hainaut and France, but prudent residents close all their shutters, and take their chance with the crowd in the streets. The festivities begin on the Monday evening and do not terminate till the sun is up on the Wednesday morning.

The nearest approach to what may be called the wild *kermesse* at Binche is the parade of Lumeçon, which takes place at Mons on Trinity Sunday. These fêtes are familiarly known as those of "doudou," but no one can give any better reason for the name than

that it rhymes with "chou, chou," the familiar term for driving or chasing something or somebody which is used as the cry of those marching in the procession. Lumeçon is the Walloon of the French word *limaçon* (a snail), but the snail of Mons is a dragon which is carried at the head of the procession in effigy. This is a gilt dragon over thirty feet in length, and when the legend on which the parade is based is critically examined, it turns out to be nothing more or less than our old friend of the nursery, St. George and the Dragon. It is impossible to assign a date to the first celebration of this fête, but it was certainly anterior to the battle of Crécy, at which a contingent from Mons fought on our side with much distinction. It has always been said that they took with them into the battle an enormous cannon which was brought home to Mons, and ever afterwards, as long as it held together, it figured in the procession, and when it came to pieces a wooden facsimile was provided. For some time, however, the cannon does not seem to have figured in the procession. The fête ends on the Grand Place with the slaying of the dragon by the modern representative of St. George, who is called Gilles de Chin in the local history.

2 4 While the fête at Mons and Binche are annual affairs, those at Hasselt, in Limburg, are held only once in seven years, and consequently they gain in elaborateness. The religious element is also more prominent. The celebration takes place on the day

of the Assumption (August 15th), which is not only a great day for the Church, but also one of the three national holidays established by law in Belgium. The last fêtes were held in 1905, so that the next fall due in 1912.

The celebration is really in honor of the Virgin Mary, and is called that of *Virga Jesse*—the *patois* for Virgin and Jesus. It seems to be as old as Hasselt itself, and the origin of the legend is thus described. Hasselt derives its name from hazel-bosch (hazel wood), and was situated in old days in the center of an immense hazel wood. The town began with a shrine to the Virgin, which, as some say, was attached to a large tree at cross roads in the heart of the forest. Travelers were so rejoiced at getting thus far in safety that they made offerings for the happy termination of their journey. In this way the shrine, to which before long a chapel was added, became rich, and in a clearing of the forest a town gradually sprang up which is the modern Hasselt. The shrine with the Virgin's statue was transformed from the wood to the church, where it may still be seen black with age. On the occasion of the celebration the statue is taken down, dressed in costly robes, and crowned with a jeweled crown given by one of the Popes, and carried under a canopy through the streets.

That is the religious side of the ceremony, but the popular is still more obtrusive. In the first place the streets are lined with hazel trees placed in buckets,

and the houses are embowered in branches and foliage gathered by the young from the neighboring woods. This is to recall the time when Hasselt itself was a wood, and the practice is said to date from the fourteenth century. Indeed, the fêtes were held annually down to the eighteenth century, and it was only under French and Dutch rule that they were restricted to a septennial celebration.

The embowering of Hasselt may be termed the preparation of the scene for what follows. The first inhabitant of Hasselt is supposed to have been a countryman named Hendrich, who lived there in a hut with his pigs and his goats. He and his wife and his animals are carried in triumph through the streets, but his modern representative is allowed to smoke his pipe, which would have somewhat astonished the original Hendrich of the tenth or eleventh century. There also figures in the procession the knight who has lost his way in the forest and is led by the Virgin to Hendrich's hut. This incident has a very important bearing on the fortunes of Hasselt, for the knight kills the giant, or ogre, who dwelt in the recesses of the forest and rendered the routes unsafe for the peaceful traveler.

The reader will have no difficulty in concluding that of all the personages in the procession the one that attracts most popular interest is the Giant himself. He is called the "Lounge Man," the long or tall man. He is so big and tall that his part in the

play cannot be filled, and he is therefore carried in effigy. He is shown in armor, seated on the trunk of a tree, placed in a wagon, or chariot, drawn by four horses. So far the procession can be interpreted in all its detail, but for the final touch in the arrangements no reasonable explanation has ever been offered. In the car behind the Giant is an immense barrel with a tap and an attendant. He serves all who wish, and who present basins, with thick pea-soup! Why it should be pea-soup no one has ever attempted to explain beyond suggesting that it might be intended as an object-lesson in the practice of sobriety. Be that as it may, the fêtes of Hassalt enjoy an immense popular success, and are attended by as many as 30,000 curious visitors from Holland and Dutch Limburg.

The fêtes of the Walloon region are even more distinctively religious than those of Hasselt. They are based, as a rule, on a miracle, and partake of the character of a pilgrimage. Typical of these may be chosen for a brief description the procession once in seven years from Rochefort to Foy Notre-Dame, near Dinant. The history of this procession is fairly well authenticated, and dates no further back than the early years of the seventeenth century. The country was then visited with the plague. Many deaths had occurred, and failing the remedies of science those of faith alone offered. It was reported that some one who had made an offering at the Virgin's shrine at Foy Notre-Dame had been cured of the disease,

whereupon the Count of Rochefort led his people in solemn procession to the shrine, which lies about fifteen miles out of Rochefort. The plague was stayed, and there does not appear to have been any further outbreak at Rochefort since that time, but the procession is still faithfully kept up.

, - Every year devout persons pay their homage at the miraculous shrine at Foy, but it is only once in seven years that the processional march is held. Long preparations and much drilling precede the expedition, which is made in military order. Those who are selected for the responsible position of the Count's bodyguard are carefully trained by an ex-soldier, not merely in the goose-step, but in the use of firearms, for a good deal of firing is indulged in on the return. The local worthy who represents the Count de Rochefort is very proud of himself, as clothed in armor he takes his place at the head of the procession on a spirited horse. He, too, has been carefully trained for his important rôle, for not every one accustomed to broadcloth can wear armor without making himself ridiculous. However, thanks to the careful preparation, all goes off very well.

The date of the procession is Whit-Monday, and it will next take place in 1913. As the distance is considerable, for the majority in the procession walk the whole way there and back, a start is made shortly after the sun rises. The Count heads the procession, then comes his bodyguard, followed by the Catholic

band playing religious and secular music. Then appear the clergy resplendent in <sup>with a splendid garment and the</sup> ~~chasuble~~ and attended <sup>by acolytes</sup> ~~the~~ by <sup>processionists</sup> ~~the~~ cortege to the limits of the town. The procession includes farmers on horseback, townsmen and villagers on foot, women and children in carts, wagons, and vehicles of all descriptions. The old women are even more keen to be present than the young, and count up the number of processions they have attended in the course of their lives. Sometimes the procession is quite a mile in length, and on that day Rochefort is left practically empty.

At Foy the procession is received by the local clergy and a crowd of curious sightseers from Dinant. A special service is held in the church, offerings are made at the shrine, and then the processionists picnic in the neighboring woods. Late in the afternoon the order of march is re-formed, and the party return to Rochefort. Darkness has long set in before they reach it, but the little town is lit up in their honor. The priests are again there to receive and bless them before they disperse, and as a final honor an old cannon is brought out from its hiding-place and fired several times on the approach to the old castle. It is said that the Count was thus received on his return from the original procession in 1610. There are many other pilgrimages or marches of a similar character carried out today in the region between the Sambre and Meuse. Here, if anywhere in Belgium, may be



found the old folk-lore of the Belgian division of ancient Gaul. Chimay, Couvin, and Mariembourg are samples of mediæval townlets not to be seen in any other part of the country.

2 1 Belgium is the home of legend. There is that of John of Nivelles and his dog. John was a Montmorency, and the ancestor of Count Horn. There is the story of Caracol and Bristecol (the history of Punch). But the most popular of all is the story of Aymon and his four sons and the wonderful horse Bayard. The Duke Aymon was one of the rebellious vassals of the Emperor Charlemagne, and when he was summoned to attend his sovereign to the wars, he sent a curt refusal, believing that his castle of Aigremont was so strong and inaccessible that the Emperor could never take it. This castle in the Houyoux valley of the region called Condroz exists today, partly as an imposing ruin and partly as the residence of the Counts D'Oultremont. It looks now inaccessible enough; no wonder it seemed to its owner in the ninth century beyond the reach of the most powerful assailant. Charlemagne having conquered his external foes, decided to chastise his vassal, and directed a host to level Aigremont with the ground. The defenders were overmatched. Aymon was taken prisoner and carried off to Aix-la-Chapelle, and his brother Buves was slain.

But Aymon's four sons escaped by mounting all together on the wonderful horse Bayard, which flew

like the wind and soon outdistanced all pursuers. They took refuge in the Ardennes forest, where they built a stronger fort than Aigremont at Montfort on the Ourthe, and here again they defied the Emperor. The four sons were named Renault, Allard, Guichard, and Richard. They were all of gigantic stature, Renault, the biggest, being sixteen feet high, and Bayard was his personal property, having been a gift from his cousin Maugis, the son of Buves. Although the castle was surrounded by a triple wall, it fell to the Emperor's arms, and again the brothers had to mount Bayard and flee. They are next heard of in Gascony where they fought for King Yon, who, little grateful for their aid, surrendered them to Charlemagne. They succeeded in escaping, but their subsequent adventures are obscure. Renault entered the cloister at Cologne, and was one of the first architects of the cathedral. He is said to have been thrown into the Rhine by some of his masons whom he had offended. If this could be accepted as fact, it would be the first "strike" on record. He was eventually canonized, and there is a fine monument to him at Dortmund, in Westphalia.

Of the other brothers there is little to tell, but report says they were all killed at different times and places. The last of them let Bayard loose, and he rushed into the forest, for the party had returned to the Ardennes. After a time Bayard himself was caught and brought before Charlemagne, who thus

apostrophized him: "You have often upset my plans and now you shall do so no more." He ordered a heavy stone to be attached to his neck and then that he should be driven from the cliff at Dinant into the Meuse. The exact scene is supposed to have been at the Rocher Bayard, near Dinant. But when the gallant horse was forced over the cliff, he succeeded in ridding himself of the stone, and swimming across the river, escaped into the woods, and was never more seen by mortal eye. The old belief was that the steed was immortal, and in some of the villages within recent times, when the wind blew loudly at nights and children were querulous, they were silenced by being warned to listen to the noise of the steed Bayard as he raced through the village.

## CHAPTER XXII

### SPORTS, OLD AND NEW

THE Netherlands have always been the home of sport. Their nobles were great huntsmen, and the forest of the Ardennes abounded in wild animals, including the wolf, until the close of the eighteenth century. Mary of Burgundy died from a fall from her horse out hawking, and the legends of the Ardennes revolve round the chase of the wild boar. The earliest popular sport was probably shooting at a mark with a crossbow, for the crossbowmen of Flanders were as famous as the archers of England. William Clito and Richard Cœur de Lion were both victims of the prowess of a crossbowman (*arbalétrier*) of Flanders. It is a remarkable proof of how old customs that have lost all utility survive to find a guild of crossbowmen still at Bruges; there used to be a guild of St. George, of which our Charles II was a member, flourishing in Hainaut. The first act demanded of a ruler after making his "joyous entry" was to shoot at the popinjay, and favorable auguries were drawn from his hitting the mark. Great was the joy, for instance, when the Infanta Isabella scored at the first trial on her arrival to establish what was expected to prove a national dynasty.

Archery was very much practiced in Hainaut in the Middle Ages, but whether the long bow was introduced into England from Hainaut, or whether the Hainauters borrowed it from their English comrades on many a stricken field may be left for the investigation of those who have leisure to make the necessary research. We have only to note that "confréries" of archers still exist at Mons, Quesnoy, and other towns of Hainaut, and that it is no unusual sight to see on Sundays and fête days members of these societies attired in a jerkin and buskin with the plumed hat associated here with Robin Hood and carrying the old six-foot longbow. Curiously enough, archery as a pastime does not seem to exist in Belgium. Modern Belgium, among the numerous games and sports it has borrowed from England, has not taken up this particular and picturesque game of skill.

Perhaps among the people the *jeu de bal* is as old as any game in Europe. It is played all over Belgium in the public squares, and even in the open streets of provincial towns. It is nothing more than hitting a small ball backwards and forwards between two players. The feature of the game is that each player holds a wooden bat or glove into which his hand is inserted. The weapon is called a glove (*gant*). As the material for this game is practically nothing at all it is not surprising to find it in general use. On fête days or at the different *kermesses* there are com-

petitions for experts at the *jeu de bal* to which the commune and even the State give money prizes.

3 - Another very old sport, still in general indulgence throughout Belgium, is pigeon-flying. Indeed, there is no sport more generally followed or more attractive to the masses. In some parts of the country it is said the Belgian working man divides his wages into three parts, one for the family, one for himself, and the third for his carrier pigeons. The extent to which the practice is indulged may be gathered from the fact that the railways receive \$600,000 a year for the carriage of the *panniers* (baskets) conveying pigeons to and from the places of meeting. Large prizes are offered by the different societies, and during the year considerable sums of money are won and lost in bets. The freeing of the birds at an important competition is a remarkable sight. At one held during the late Brussels Exposition it was declared that as many as 100,000 birds were let loose at the same moment from the baskets of their owners.

In old days contests between rival parties mounted on stilts were a feature of life at Namur. The use of stilts there seems to have arisen from the prevalence of floods, and from the fact that by their means it was possible to cross the river Sambre when the stream was low. The old town of Namur was situated in the fork of the two rivers, and the new town was that which sprang up on the left bank of the Sambre. There was a keen rivalry between the two, and the

opponents were called *échasseurs* because their battles were fought on stilts (*échasses*). To put a curb on the practice of constant irregular fighting, it was arranged by the town authorities to hold a joust once a year on the Place St. Rémy (now the Place d'Armes) facing the Town Hall. The two factions, called the Melans for the old town and Avresses for the new, sent their chosen champions to the fray wearing distinctive costumes and colors, yellow and black for the Melans, and red and white for the Avresses. As a rule, the contestants were so skilful in either upsetting their opponents or falling themselves that they escaped any serious injury, but when the French revolutionists overran the country, these jousts were abolished as a survival of feudalism and as not comporting with the gravity of the times.

5 We come now to the introduction of what were essentially English sports into Belgium. About thirty years ago young Belgium in the great cities, such as Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, and Bruges, took up football, hockey, and amateur competitions on the running-ground. It was done in a modest and diffident sort of way at first, and some supercilious English critics said of the early football teams that they were not sure what the game was. But that initial stage has passed away, and whatever his skill or success there is one characteristic common to all Belgian athletes. He is in real earnest. No hour is too early for him to get up and begin training; he is ever ready to join

in a game or a trial. In fact, he displays the old sporting spirit and go which were the monopoly of Englishmen. The contrast is furnished in Brussels by the young Englishmen who happen to reside in Brussels. They pass most of their time at the cafés and smoking cigarettes. It would be impossible today to get together in Brussels or the whole of Belgium an English side that could hold its own at either football or hockey with any of the leading Belgian college or club teams. This was not the case even fifteen years ago. Owing to the absence of suitable playing fields cricket has not yet caught on in Belgium, but at the new club grounds in the Avenue Longchamp several first-rate pitches have been laid down and the game finds a few enthusiastic followers. But cricket is never likely to become as general in Belgium as football or hockey.

It is in boating, however, that young Belgium has made the most sensational progress, but in this particular matter Ghent must be regarded as standing for Belgium. Two boating clubs, the *Cercle Nautique de Gand* and the Royal Club of Ghent, were founded in the Flemish capital about twenty-five years ago, and the services of English trainers were engaged. The Scheldt at Ghent is a little superior to the Cam as a river and a little inferior to the Isis. The sport or recreation rapidly became very popular among the young Flemings, and under clever coaching they made great progress. About twenty years ago they began



to compete with the Dutch at Amsterdam and the Germans at Hamburg. They began by holding their own, and after a time they scored some successes. These preliminaries instilled confidence into them, and at last, in 1898, they sent a crew to take part in Henley regatta.

This was thought rather audacious on their part, and, to tell the truth, the contestants thought so themselves, but "nothing venture nothing have." During the first few years of their appearing at Henley the Belgians gained no successes, but some observers remarked that each time they came they were gradually getting nearer. At last in 1905 they got into the final heat for the Grand Challenge Cup. In 1906 they scored their first victory, carrying off the cup to Ghent, where the victors were received with a public triumph. In 1907 they won again, and the cup was again carried off to the banks of the Scheldt. The Olympic games of 1908 witnessed the next struggle, and on this occasion a picked crew of the Leander Club wrested the cup from the Belgian visitors after a hard contest. But at the regatta of 1909 the Belgians were again victorious, no special effort having been made in this country to resist the invaders. In 1910 the Ghent clubs professed their inability to send a representative team and the cup was returned to England. Even if Belgium never scored again at Henley her representatives did enough for glory and to show that in whatever they take up they are doughty adversaries.

7 Swimming has long been a popular relaxation and swimming baths are to be found in most of the towns. The rivers are also utilized for floating baths. Fencing is also much in vogue, and *cercles d'escrime* are numerous. The Belgians are not quite on a level with the French or possibly the Italians, but they are better than all other nations. Swedish gymnastics have latterly been introduced and are now compulsory in the army. A still more recent importation is golf, and first-rate links have been laid out near Antwerp. Speaking generally, sport and athletic games have been taken up with greater avidity and pursued with more energy and perseverance by the Flemings than the Walloons, but of course in the upper strata of society race does not tell at all. The temperament of the Walloon does undoubtedly make him more averse to great exertion than is the case with the Fleming.

This reservation does not apply, however, to anything that has to do with shooting game or riding horses. The Ardennes are part of the Walloon country, and here every one is more or less of a sportsman. For the magnate there are extensive preserves in which pheasants, wild duck, woodcock, and deer of all kinds abound; for the rich there are the shooting rights in the communal woods, which can be rented; and for the people there is the free right in the river valleys to snare woodcock and snipe at certain periods. The principal delight of the sportsman is the wild boar battue which goes on through the winter. In the

Campine region black game and partridge are found in large quantities, and in the late autumn the delicious tasting "grives" are captured by the thousand. There is a royal chasse at Villers sur Lesse, near Ciergnon, another at the château of the Amerois, and as King Albert is a good shot, like his father, the late Comte de Flandre, and his grandfather Leopold I, it is possible that the Ardennes will see more royal battues in the near future than they have at any former period. The provincial noblesse are rather conservative in their methods. For deer and boar they prefer a charge of slugs to the single bullet of a small bore rifle.

§ - The Belgians generally take great pride in their horses. At Antwerp the heavy Flemish breed predominates, and iron-greys are rather in favor for private carriages. In Luxemburg and Liège, the Ardennais, a smaller breed than that of Flanders, but extremely handsome when pure bred, is most often met with. At Brussels English thoroughbreds and Irish hunters are most in demand. A Belgian gentleman is very dissatisfied if he cannot keep one horse, and most of the houses in the fashionable quarter have the *porte cochère*, which denotes that there is a stable in the rear. A house is then entitled to use the grander designation of a *hôtel*.

Within the last twenty years horse-racing has been introduced into Belgium. It began at Ostend and Spa as fashionable watering-places, with the view of at-

tracting foreign visitors. After a time two race-courses were laid out for Brussels, one at Boitsfort, near the Bois de la Cambre, the other at Groenenael, in the forest of Soignes. Both these places are picturesquely situated and well arranged. The fashionable world goes to Boitsfort in particular during the summer season, and the Avenue Louise is crowded with carriages, and latterly with motor-cars as well, on the occasion of the principal meetings. These are always held on Sundays, and as the prizes have been greatly increased in value, many sportsmen attend from Paris, and even from London. It is said that horse-racing has taken a strong hold on the Belgian mind, and that it has become a national pastime. But this is by no means certain. The majority of those who attend the races at Boitsfort go there simply to meet their friends and show off their dresses, and probably never make a bet. A subscription is taken for the whole season which reduces the charge of admission to each meeting to a very low figure. There are other race-courses in different parts of the country, but they are of minor importance and have no attractions for society. A large proportion of the horses were formerly imported from England, but the native-bred horse is coming to the front, and Belgium has started its own stud book.

Horse-racing in Belgium has as many opponents as here, and the reformers who put down gambling in the casinos and clubs with a ruthless hand often

declaim against the evils of the new importation. Although they are not likely to succeed in putting an end to horse-racing altogether, it seems probable that they will succeed in preventing its extension, and the number of meetings is not likely to increase. There is, besides, a stronger reason. The greater prizes to be gained on the French turf will always draw off the most ambitious and successful of owners of race-horses in Belgium.

Enough has been written to show that sport in all its branches and phases is in vigorous life and constant progression among all classes of the Belgian people.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### CHARACTERISTICS AND CUSTOMS

**M**OST foreign visitors to Belgium give a very unflattering description of Belgian character, and fix upon some national traits or habits to make them subjects of ridicule. This was not the impression I formed of the people during the several years I resided in the country, mixing with all classes of society and visiting parts rarely if ever visited by tourists. There are, of course, disagreeable persons in Belgium as in every other country, but I brought away the most agreeable opinion of the good qualities of the people as a whole, and in saying this I make no distinction between Walloons and Flemings. Both have their attractive side, although the latter are perhaps, on the whole, the most agreeable people to deal with. Leaving for others the unpleasant task of criticism, I only wish to dwell here on some of the popular types as they struck me in a favorable manner.

If I were asked what class of men, taken as a whole, impressed me most favorably in Belgium, I should have to reply, the postman, or the *facteur* as he is called. The Belgian *facteur* has raised the science of delivering letters to the level of a fine art. He works with his head as well as his fin-

gers. He has mastered the first secret of the profession. The important fact on the envelope is not the address, but the name of the person. His object is to find that person. An error in number does not baffle him. There may be no street on the address. The name is called out to the assembled *facteurs* in the sorting-hall at the Grandes Postes, and the man who goes out to St. Giles or Etterbeck exclaims: "There is a person of that name at such and such an address; give it to me and I will see if it is for him." If the person cannot be found this way, the register at the *bureau de police* is searched. If the name is not there, then only is it returned to the dead-letter office. I have had letters delivered to me which only had the name Brussels, and I was a stranger in the land.

There is another art that the *facteur* has learnt. He is always cheerful of aspect, as if he were the bearer of nothing but good news, and when he brings a registered letter, he quite beams. I have once or twice, however, seen a grave sternness displace the smile, when the dull foreign tourist, ignorant of the general custom, omitted to give him the three or four sous that is the usual reward for a *lettre chargée*. It is little omissions of this sort that explain a good deal of our unpopularity on the Continent. The Belgian postman not only delivers the letters, but also the newspapers to subscribers, and I never recollect a paper going astray in the course of three years. Perhaps he is seen at his best on the occasion of the

New Year, when it is the custom to send one's visiting card to all one's friends and acquaintances. Then he works like a Titan to distribute the three million bits of pasteboard in Brussels alone.

It may be admitted that the Brussels *facteur* would never be able to get through his work, or to do it so well, but for the electric trams, which carry him from one end of the town to the other. These are used for another purpose in the matter of correspondence. A letter box is to be found at the end of each car, into which an express letter, bearing an extra 25 centimes, or 2-cent stamp, may be dropped, and it will then be delivered as rapidly as possible, not only in Brussels, but throughout the kingdom. Telegraph boys are waiting at all the chief stopping-places to open these boxes, examine the letters, and take out those for places near at hand. If for the provinces, the letter is taken out at the station, sent off by the next train, and delivered by telegraph boy, or if the postoffice is closed, by the station porter. No doubt this system works better because the railways are owned and managed by the State. Express letters are in common use in Belgium, and, as worked on the uniform charge of five cents, no matter what the distance may be, are undoubtedly a great public convenience.

The tram-car employees are also a deserving body. They work very hard during long hours, and yet they always seem fresh and up to the mark. The cars are



divided into first and second class, the difference being that in the former there are cushions. The *receveurs*, or collectors, are often the recipients of a little perquisite. Where the change would often be a centime of halfpenny, the fare will often not accept it, whereupon the *receveur* politely raises his cap. These little favors, especially during the summer time, total up to a considerable addition to the meager wages paid by the tram companies. I cannot remember seeing a tram-car collector rude or disobliging to any one, and when a passenger rises too late to stop the car at one of the *arrets facultatifs*, he will generally express his regret at having got too far to make it possible. Accidents are not as numerous as might be expected, but pedestrians have to be on their guard, especially in passing behind a stationary car on to the opposite line of traffic.

11. The railway officials are another class who come a good deal under one's observation in traveling about the country. If the best side of them is to be seen, they require a little management, and some consideration must be paid to their dignity as State officials. The tourist is rather prone to address the red-capped *chef de gare* as if he were a porter at home, appointed for the express purpose of giving bewildered travelers information. That is not included among the duties of a station-master in Belgium. His function is to look after the trains, not the travelers. On the other hand, if the traveler approaches him in the cor-

rect manner, which means by raising his hand to his hat, he at once unbends, and will do everything he can to assist him. The railway guards and ticket-collectors also have nothing whatever to do with luggage, and it is beneath their dignity to help to take it out of the carriage. The porters are few in number, and their duties of taking the luggage out of the van, etc., monopolize their time, so they, too, are unable to assist travelers. As all these functionaries wear some sort of uniform, it is to them that the tourist looks for aid which he never receives, and consequently he or she feels aggrieved at the indifference with which the demand for a porter is received.

If, however, the traveler should utter the word *Commissionaire*, there would be no lack of ready hands to carry the baggage, as on every platform a good supply of these men stand ready for a job. They can easily be distinguished by their linen shirts or smocks, and generally have a badge, either on their cap or on their arm. These are the railway porters, in our sense of the term, but they have no authority in the station, and must not do anything else but carry luggage. They are to be found outside the station also, but at Brussels a penny ticket has to be taken for them to secure their admission to the platform, even when carrying travelers' luggage.

The Brussels policeman has often been held up to ridicule, but it is altogether undeserved. A recent cartoon in *Punch* pictures a small representative of

the law trying in vain to get a big Flemish *ouvrier* out of a beer-shop and finally ending the colloquy by saying, "Then stay where you are." The cartoon is not more true to life than such skits generally are. In the first place, the Brussels policeman is not so very small, but his loose and comfortable costume does not give him the stiff and imposing appearance of our guardians of the law. He is really a very active individual, and his courage is beyond question. It must be remembered that the criminal class with which he has to deal is far more dangerous than ours, apart from the alien element in some of our large cities, which is giving our police authorities a taste of Continental conditions. Brussels criminals always carry revolvers, and know how to use them, and as they generally work in couples, a solitary policeman has to be always on his guard. The newspapers are seldom without an account of an affray in which revolver shots are exchanged, but it is very rarely that a criminal escapes the hands of justice. The Brussels policeman is not, however, assumed to be at the service of every pedestrian in search of information. Still, if asked a question with sufficient politeness, he will reply to the extent of his knowledge with equal civility. But his engrossing duty is to watch the criminal classes, and to prevent them doing much mischief. This duty he discharges in an efficient manner, considering that the force to which he belongs is nu-

merically weak, and that the criminal class is proportionally large.

Passing to a higher class in society, I wish to say a good word for the Belgian officer. He, not less than the Brussels policeman, is made an object of caricaturists, and very unjustly. I have known or met a great many of them, and I have found them intelligent, earnest, and devoted to their profession, although its prospects are not very seductive, and the chances of earning any glory in it seem remote. This is the more remarkable, because the greater number of Belgian officers come from the body of the people. They represent not a separate class or caste, but just the ordinary citizens of the country, and many of them have risen from the grade of *sous-officers*. The noble class only enters the Guides, and to a less extent the Grenadiers, Lancers, and Carabiniers. Outside the Guides there is also a complete absence of what we call "side." The Belgian officer is a quiet, inoffensive fellow, rather inclined to take the small affairs of his barrack life a little too seriously, but entitled to special credit for the attention he pays to the wants of his men, and to preserving good relations with them. It is not his fault if so little fighting has fallen to his lot, and if his reputation in real warfare has still to be made.

The official class in Belgium presents what we should consider the most favorable type of the Belgian gentleman. An official is always extremely cour-

teous (I speak of the representatives of the higher administration), and rather a stickler for formality. The pith of his remarks may be small, but he will cover it with a number of polite phrases, expressed in classic French. The staff of each *cabinet*, or the inner private office of a Secretary of State, or director of a department, is carefully recruited from the most promising candidates, who are selected for their personal appearance and family connections as well as their attainments. They have also to undergo, after appointment, qualifying examinations to prove their fitness to pass into the higher grades. In the Foreign Office, the highest level of excellence is maintained.

In speaking of the characteristics and customs of the Belgians, one should not omit to mention the women of Belgium, who are noted for their thrift, cleanliness, and capacity for work. Even visitors from other countries, who are prejudiced against everything foreign, and who have not a word to say in behalf of the men, are impressed in their favor. There is a complete absence of that tawdriness which is so obtrusive and offensive among our working classes, and the neat and tidy way in which all the women in Belgium, without exception, arrange their hair is a striking contrast with the dishevelled locks or flouting chignons of their English and American sisters. A case of a Belgian woman wearing any hair but her own is not to be found. The first impression formed in the country is that the women do all the work,

which brings the reflection in its train that the men must have an easy time of it. On the latter point this is corrected by greater knowledge of the subdivision of labor; but the opinion that the female half of the community works as hard as the male will not in any way be modified. Women manage all the shops, from the small groceries and greengroceries up to business of importance, and it is only in the largest establishments that men take their place. They will be helped in this task by their children or, if there is one, by their grandfather; but it is considered somewhat undignified for an active man to mind a shop. He will often seek and obtain employment outside the business which his wife stops at home to conduct. All the purveyors and carriers of milk are women, and their little carts drawn by dogs with their bright brass cans, are one of the sights of Brussels, especially when they are all assembled on the Grand Place for inspection.

As between Flemish and Walloon women it is difficult for an outsider to draw a just comparison. In appearance the Flemings are shorter and slighter than their half-sisters. They are also a fair-haired race, with bright complexions and pink cheeks. The Walloon is far taller and big in proportion, generally dark, with pale face and very marked features, although tradition declares that she should be fair, and assigns for dark-haired women a Spanish or even a Roman origin, which is going rather far back. It is not at

all uncommon to meet a flaxen-haired woman of grand physique among the Walloons of Liége and Luxemburg, and this is especially the case among some of the old noble families. But, as a rule, the Walloon woman is dark, just as the Flemish is fair. There is more energy about the Fleming and more dignity about the Walloon. The former works harder and calls the latter lazy; the latter is a better manager, and requires a higher grade of comfort in her domestic life, and is disposed to regard her Flemish sisters as being somewhat behind the day and not quite on the same plane of culture as herself. There may be some foundation for this, and if we were to apply the test of cooking, Walloon cooks are pronounced superior in every way to Flemish. It is said that the Flemings, despite their clean and natty appearance in the streets, are not so scrupulously clean in their domestic arrangements as is desirable, and as is undoubtedly the case throughout the Walloon country. Both have a marked partiality for fine clothes and bright colors, and those who have only observed the people in their workaday clothes would not recognize the same persons as they go to mass on Sundays. The Walloons dress in better taste than the Flemings, and as they are considerably taller, they carry their clothes more gracefully and with greater effect. The art of dress-making has been carried to a higher point of perfection among them, and most Walloon girls can cut out their own clothes and make them in the latest

fashion. It is quite remarkable to notice the degree to which the art of dressing well is carried among the Walloon women of all classes, especially as there is no corresponding movement among the men. While the men in their Sunday clothes are just ordinary provincials, their wives and daughters might easily be mistaken for *Parisennes*.

The characteristics which mark the people at large are also found among the leisured and well-to-do classes. The Belgian lady has very much the same views of life as her humbler sister. Money means practically finer clothes, more visits to the theater, a longer vacation at the seaside or in the country, but the objects that constitute her ideas of a pleasant life are practically the same. Society passes its time with a certain lazy indifference and a complete absence of the exciting whirl of entertainments that constitutes life in New York, London, or Paris. There is a considerable amount of visiting, afternoon teas, the daily drive to the Bois, and there are occasional charity bazaars; but these must all form part of the regular existence anywhere of those who have no obligation to work for a living. The chief feature of Belgian society, as of Belgian life generally, is its domesticity. The family and its affairs form the pivot upon which the whole social system turns. It is very creditable and homelike, if the charge cannot be avoided that the result is a trifle dull.



In Luxemburg there is still a quaint custom maintained, in the celebration of the "dancing procession." Not long after the death of Bishop Willebrod, Luxemburg was visited by a cattle plague, and it was a popular belief in those days that the only way to restore the animals affected was for the men and women to imitate them by dancing and jumping about. The plague on this occasion was not arrested by these steps, and then it was proposed that a chosen band of "holy dancers" should proceed to St. Willebrod's shrine and make an offering. The result of this proceeding was considered to be the staying of the plague and the practice has been followed ever since, for over 1,100 years.

The dancing procession in its modern dress, which distinguishes it from the more austere presentment of the Middle Ages, is one of the prettiest sights that could be imagined. The participants reveal sometimes the fatigue natural from their severe physical exercise, but none of the frenzy of religious zeal in a high state of exaltation. The procession is formed on Prussian territory, across the bridge over the Sure, and many participants come from the Eiffel, where the people are as good Catholics as in the Duchy. All that region was subject to the Luxemburg princes centuries before Prussia was thought of, and St. Willebrod's fame is not restricted by present-day frontiers.

About nine in the morning of Whit-Tuesday, those

who intend joining the procession form up on the eastern side of the bridge, the clergy await them on the western, and when the signal is given, the priests, with their attendant acolytes, lead the way. The bridge and its approaches are fifty yards across, from the bridge to the Church of St. Pierre through the main street of the town 1,200 mètres (1,310 yards nearly) have to be traversed, and the dancers have to move three steps forward at a time and then take two backwards. For each five steps they take then they move forward only one; for the 1,200 mètres they come 6,000. The procession is formed seven in a line, and the dancers keep together by holding pocket-handkerchiefs or scarves between them. Along the route, which is crowded, firemen are stationed to pick up those who fall, and the spectators exhort the dancers to persevere to the end.

The end is the hardest part of the ordeal, for the Church of St. Pierre stands on a slight eminence which is reached by sixty-two steep steps. Even here the processionists, after mounting three steps, have to retrace two, and the steps are worn and hollowed by the countless pilgrims of many centuries. The procession ends in front of the Saint's shrine, and by that time the dancers, who include persons of all ages from youth to old age and members of both sexes, are quite exhausted by their four miles of hopping. After the ceremony a popular fête is held for the amusement of

the twenty thousand visitors who flock into the town on these occasions. The pilgrimage, or procession, is probably the oldest of its kind still existing in Europe, and the fervor of the participants, like the interest of the spectators, shows no sign of abatement.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### WATERWAYS AND RAILWAYS

**A**LTHOUGH canals in Belgium are not so obtrusive as they are in Holland, yet they are far more important and numerous than the visitor to the country might imagine. The question of the internal waterways, which may be subdivided into rivers, canalized rivers, and canals, of the country has always been of national import. The guilds of the watermen (*bateliers*) were, in the days of the communes, among the most important at Ypres, Bruges, and Ghent; it was on a matter of rivalry between their boatmen that Ghent fell upon Ypres and shattered its power in 1383. At the present time, despite the advent of railways, communication by water is of the greatest value to the economic system of Belgium, and a new policy has been inaugurated of constructing new ship-canal or enlarging old ones for the passage of ocean steamers into the heart of the country.

The rivers used as waterways for commerce are the Meuse, the Scheldt, the Lys, the Dendre, and the Dyle. The importance of the Scheldt may be judged from the fact that three great cities, Antwerp, Ghent, and Tournai, are situated upon it, and that boats paid toll on it at Tournai in the tenth century. The Meuse,

the Lys, and the Dendre have been canalized in different parts of their courses, and the question of the more effective control of the Meuse below Maestricht is one in which the Belgian public apparently takes more interest than the Dutch. Further reference will be made to this matter.

In the official list kept in the office of the "*Ponts et Chaussées*" fifty-two separate canal systems are recognized among the national waterways. They have a total length of 1,637 kilometres, or a little over 1,020 miles. The total tonnage of goods carried by ordinary boats on these waterways in 1908 reached the enormous total of 1,111,773,961 tons. Of this only a small part related to foreign countries. The imports into Belgium by water in the same year amounted to 6,228,815 tons and the exports to 7,128,390.

In addition to the fifty-two canals, etc., enumerated there are five ship-canals, viz.:

	Length in Kilometers	Tonnage
Brussels to the Rupel.....	27.3	4,807,029
Ghent, Bruges, Ostend.....	23.3	267,723
Ghent to Terneuzen.....	17.5	22,898,308
Louvain to the Dyle.....	30.6	8,280
Bruges to Zeebrugge.....	16	475,810
	<hr/> 114.7	<hr/> 28,457,150

These figures establish the importance to Belgium of her canals and riverways. Canal life in Holland is a more picturesque affair than in Belgium, but it may be questioned whether the amount of traffic is as great in the Northern Netherlands as it has become in the

Southern. The following are the details of the goods conveyed by the internal canals:

Combustibles .....	319,656,095	tons
Minerals, etc.....	108,881,739	"
Building Materials and Metals.....	211,016,193	"
China and Glass.....	88,066,579	"
Wood .....	36,191,028	"
Agricultural Produce.....	165,146,470	"
Industrial Produce.....	52,004,753	"
Merchandise .....	130,811,104	"
Total .....	1,111,773,961	"

In a recent year the ordinary expenses on canals and waterways amounted to \$477,234.40, and the receipts from tolls to \$419,519.60. But in 1907 and 1908 a capital expenditure of nearly \$10,000,000 on the improvement of canals and rivers as waterways was sanctioned. This shows the importance attached to their development.

† - It was Drusus, it will be recollected, who first introduced a system of canalization into the Netherlands by giving a new arm to the Rhine, and there is evidence that the canals from Ostend to Bruges, with a prolongation towards Ghent, and from Brussels to the Rupel and the Scheldt, existed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. When Charles of Lorraine completed the Bruges-Ghent canal 150 years ago, it was especially recorded that it had been commenced in 1379. When the Willebroek canal was enlarged in the sixteenth century, it enabled William the Silent to perform the whole journey by water from Antwerp to Brussels. In mediæval Flanders the Lys provided

Ghent with a natural water route to Courtrai and, incidentally, to Ypres as well, and the Scheldt one to Audenarde and Tournai. Further east the Dender connected Termonde with Alost and Grammont, while the Ruppel and the Senne linked Brussels with the Scheldt.

- 5 - In many respects the Meuse, which is partly a French and partly a Dutch river, is the most important of all Belgian waterways. In its upper course it is linked with some of the most important French canals (the canal des Ardennes among others), giving access to the heart of the old provinces of Champagne, Lorraine, and Burgundy. The wine of these provinces is imported by water the whole way to Dinant, Namur, and Liége, and this mode of conveyance explains why the wines of Burgundy have always been especially excellent in Belgium. There is another reason for the superexcellence of Burgundy in the Meuse valley. The cellars are cut in the rock, and at certain seasons of the year when the river is in flood the water is admitted, and when the tide falls it leaves the bottles clothed in mud which is said to invest them with a special and stimulating protection. In old days wine and wood were the principal articles conveyed on the Meuse, but since 1880 the most important import has been iron from the famous iron-field of the Vosges. This is sent direct to Liége, or branches off at Namur to proceed up the Sambre to Charleroi. Thanks to this cheap water conveyance, French iron competes

successfully with that from Germany or the Grand Duchy, which can only reach the Liège market after a more or less costly railway journey. Since the exhaustion of the home iron mines between the Sambre and Meuse, Belgium has been entirely dependent on the supply from foreign sources, and cheap transport necessarily forms an important point in the degree of profit with which this mineral can be utilized.

The most important question relating to the Meuse is as to the possibility of establishing communication for ocean steamers to as high up as Liège. This is rather a Belgian grievance, as the Dutch authorities have been accused of apathy and indifference. The matter requires a little careful consideration.

When it became clear, after the Belgian Revolution, that Dutch rule was ended in what used to be called the Spanish Netherlands, the Dutch clung to the possession of the town of Maestricht for sentimental reasons as the scene of the heroism of their race, and the indulgent Powers accepted and supported the claim. Maestricht is, however, of not the slightest practical value to Holland. At the same time that Maestricht was left to the Dutch the part of Limburg lying on the right bank of the Meuse was ceded to Holland as compensation for what it lost in Luxemburg. This, roughly speaking, consists of the cantons of Sittard and Ruremonde. While these cessions of territory were made for the benefit of Holland, it was expressly laid down that the use of all



canals was to be free and common for both countries. It may be useful to quote the precise stipulations of the treaty, for this question of the Middle Meuse is very likely to become important if only for the interesting and difficult engineering problems connected with it. The following is the text of the special Articles relating to the matter:

"Art. 10.—The use of the canals which traverse simultaneously both countries shall continue to be free and common to their inhabitants. It is understood that the enjoyment thereof shall be reciprocal, and on the same conditions, and that on both sides there will be on the canals only moderate navigation dues. Art. II.—Commercial communications by way of the town of Maestricht and that of Sittard shall remain entirely free and shall not be impeded on any pretext whatsoever."

The importance of this strip of Dutch territory to Belgium is that it intercepts Belgian communications with Germany, while Holland is bound not to impose more than moderate tolls on goods passing to and from Germany by either road or canal. The most important canal in the region is the South William Canal which connects Maestricht with Bois le Duc, passing through a certain portion of Belgian territory. This canal is used chiefly because it saves the wide bend of the Meuse by Venlo, but if the Meuse itself were canalized below Visé, there is no doubt that Belgian traffic would favor the main river.

At the present time Venlo marks the limit of upstream navigation for steamers. There is a regular daily

packet from Rotterdam to this place, but the Dutch have made no attempt to improve the river above that town for the reason, as they admit, that it would benefit Liége. In anticipation of something being done by the Dutch the Belgians have canalized the Meuse below Liége to the frontier at Visé, and expend a certain sum annually in its up-keep by dredging. But the state of the river below Visé has rendered this a useless expense. Small pleasure steamers ply in the summer between Liége and Maestricht as they do above Namur to Dinant and Waulsort, but these have no commercial value.

Belgium's possession of the left bank of the Meuse, interrupted by the enclave of Maestricht, continues below the circumference of that town to a point almost equidistant between Masseyck and Ruremonde. The whole of this strip of the Meuse of which Holland holds the right bank, is uncanalized and of no use to commerce beyond what may be conveyed in barges. Moreover, the river in flood is dangerous for navigation even by them, and between Ruremonde and Venlo, where Holland holds both banks, the floods are aggravated by the addition of the equally uncontrolled waters of the river Roer, which flows into the Meuse at Ruremonde. Both the Belgians and the Dutch citizens of Limburg consider it a grievance that nothing has been done in this matter, and lay the chief blame at the door of the Hague Government. The people of Ruremonde in particular grumble a

good deal because it is impossible for excursion steamers to come as high as that place. It would be different, they have been heard to say, if we belonged to Belgium.

A Dutch-Belgian commission has, however, been considering the question of late, and something may soon be done. The Belgian Government is quite prepared to undertake its share of the work and the expenditure, and that of Holland without committing itself has recently displayed more interest than it has ever done on any former occasion. The canalization of the Meuse between Visé and Venlo would no doubt be a costly affair, but the reclamation of the land now subject to inundation would go far towards meeting the whole expenditure.

7 - Another great question with regard to the improvement of Belgian waterways is that of rectifying the course of the Scheldt just below Antwerp. The river here takes a wide sweep to the westward, and it has been proposed to obviate this by cutting a new bed for the river across the neck of the promontory. This scheme is known as "*la grande coupure*," and has had as many opponents as supporters. But there seems no reason for doubting that it is practically decided on, and that as soon as the removal of the *enceinte*, now in progress, has been effected, this task will be taken in hand. No other hypothesis will explain the postponement of work on the two forts intended to defend the river approach to the great city.

The adoption of the "*grande coupure*" will not merely give a direct entrance to the existing quays (thus saving a curve of at least six miles), but it will also allow of their extension northward for a distance of two miles. It must also be remembered that the lower Scheldt is in a special degree liable to visitations of fog, and the straighter the river course becomes the more is the risk of accident diminished. For the moment the weak point in the defenses of Antwerp is to be found on the side of approach from the sea owing to the deferred settlement of the "*grande coupure*" problem.

The reported intention of the Dutch Government to fortify the mouth of the Scheldt at Flushing has raised considerable discussion in Belgium, where the Scheldt is regarded as essentially a Belgian river. In 1831-39 Europe very foolishly gave Holland both banks of the Scheldt from a short distance below Lillo, but at the same time it established the common rights (that is to say joint and equal) of Belgium and Holland in the navigation of the river. A Dutch fortress at the mouth of the river might seriously interfere with and, indeed, close the access to Antwerp from the sea. Under certain contingencies this might mean all the difference between national salvation and perdition. It is not surprising then if Belgian opinion is seriously disturbed at the outlook.

Belgium was the first Continental State to take up a system of railway construction under the auspices

of the Government. Immediately upon his arrival in the country King Leopold I ordered the appointment of a commission to prepare a plan, and two competent engineers, Messrs. Simons and De Ridder, were entrusted with the task of surveying the country with special reference to such a design. The hostilities with the Dutch and the uncertainty as to Belgium's own future no doubt explained how it was that the elaboration of the plan required three years. The report recommended that Malines should be selected as the central point, and that through it should pass a line north and south from Antwerp to Brussels and Namur, and east and west from Ostend to Bruges, Ghent, Louvain and Liège. The report was adopted, and in May, 1835, the first train ran from Malines to Brussels. In the following year communication was established with Ghent and Liège. M. Charles Rogier was the minister who carried out the King's wishes, and the seventeen speeches he delivered on the subject in a single season contained a remarkable prognostication as to the influence railways would exercise on the development of the country.

Encouraged by the success of the Government main lines, a large number of public companies were formed for the purpose of constructing special local lines that seemed to be needed, and at one time these represented a greater mileage than the State-owned lines, but these, as was always the intention, have, with very few exceptions, been bought up. At the end of

1908 the distribution of the different lines of railway is shown in the following table, the mileage being approximate:

	Mileage
Railways built by the State.....	637
Railways built for the State and taken over by it.....	443
Railways built by Private Companies and bought up by the State .....	1,430
Railways worked by the State in conjunction with the Companies .....	150
Total mileage under State control.....	2660

There are also seven small private railway companies with a total mileage of 250 miles, but portions of these lines are on Dutch and French territory.

The total cost of constructing the State-controlled lines is given at a little over five hundred million dollars, or at the rate of \$200,000 per mile. The number of persons employed on these railways was in the year named 70,500, and there were 1,557 stations and minor halts. These are all included in an official guide called the *Indicateur Belge*, or *Guide Official*, published three times a year at the price of threepence. Fares are based on a fixed charge per kilometre, and season tickets are issued for short or long periods available over the whole of Belgium. The season tickets bear a photograph of identity and require a deposit of five francs, returnable at the close of the period for which the ticket is taken. The short-term tickets—five or fifteen days—are especially suitable and convenient for tourists. The total number of travelers on all Belgian railways in 1908 was nearly 177 millions.

As the state is responsible for accidents and has to indemnify for death or injury, the following statistics are interesting. Out of the 177 million passengers in 1908, forty-seven were killed and 1,015 injured. Out of the 70,500 employees fifty-one were killed and 549 injured. In addition to these, seventy-eight persons described as neither traveling at the time of the accident nor employed on the railways were killed and seventy-four wounded. Included in this total were suicides and persons killed at level crossings.

In addition to her heavy railways Belgium is endowed with an extensive system of light railways which have been immensely developed and extended within the last twenty years. In 1890 there were only 705 kilometres constructed, but in 1908 the total had risen to 3,260 kilometres, or nearly 2,040 miles, and each year witnesses the construction of some more of these useful feeders. These light railways have proved very profitable.

Statistics are not available as to the total number of passengers on light railways, but the return of accidents shows among passengers nine killed and seventy-two injured, among employees two killed and ten injured, and among other persons forty-two killed and forty injured. The high number of accidents to outsiders will not be surprising to those who know that these railways are quite unprotected, and that the track passes through woods where it is often difficult to see the train's approach. The trains on these

lines are restricted to a speed of sixteen miles an hour. The carriages are small, and each is divided by a glass door into two compartments, one for smokers and the other for non-smokers. The platform at each extremity is available for passengers, and is specially coveted when the route happens to pass through pretty scenery, as is the case between Paliseul and Bouillon. The season tickets mentioned above are available also on the majority of the light railways.



## CHAPTER XXV

### THE COLONIAL QUESTION

**B**ELGIUM having been provided with a magnificent colony in the vast Congo region, not by her own merit or efforts, but by the cleverness, courage, and pertinacity of her great ruler, Leopold II, there are two points of view from which her position as a Colonial Power may be regarded. The first is as to her capacity to retain what she did not acquire by national merit or achievement, and the second is as to how far an African dependency can be successfully governed by a small parent State which has been compelled by the force of opinion and pressure from outside to accept conditions of perfection far in advance of what I would call the chronometrical stage that has been reached in the development of the African problem.

I must clinch this point to make the differentiation in my argument clear. Belgium is a small Power, she cannot escape from the position under any conceivable circumstances. The meaning of this applied to practical affairs is that she will be held more rigidly than others to the literal execution of her own program defined by the principles of somebody else. I foresee grave troubles ahead for Belgium in this direc-

tion, and so far as I have means of judging, Belgian authorities do not appreciate them. A Great Power like England may have the finest principles placed at the head of her African program, but who is to control her if she interpret them in her own way? Belgium has adopted those principles, but she will be kept to them. Her range of license and liberty in judgment and action are restricted. However, let us serious students of that dark and menacing African problem only rejoice that for a time at least the Congo controversy has been laid at rest and that one may write the name without fear of being denounced as a partisan.

We have been told that the Belgians are not a colonizing people. It might be rejoined that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when colonizing by the European Powers began, the Dutch took good care that they should not become one. In the eighteenth century the debut of the Ostend Company was so promising that its English rival took very effective measures to cut short its life. About sixty years ago Leopold I began to point out that Belgium was growing so fast at home that she must look about for possessions across the oceans. She was exhorted to look about not merely for fresh markets, but for points of vantage that would secure fresh markets eventually. She made attempts in Guatemala, Formosa, and elsewhere. Nothing, however, came of them. In 1875, ten years after the second Leopold

came to the throne, Belgium was without a colonial possession, and her flag was unknown outside French and English harbors.

The change that then took place was due to the happy inspiration of the King of the Belgians to concentrate his attention on the African slave trade question which had been brought to the front by the efforts of Sam Baker, Richard Burton, and David Livingstone. But at that moment nothing was known of the heart of Africa, and more particularly as to how it might be reached from the West Coast. It was, therefore, a very appropriate subject for a Geographical Conference, and King Leopold seized the opportunity to invite the qualified authorities to hold it in Brussels. That was the first stone on the road to an African dominion. The second was the securing and monopolizing of the services of Stanley when he attempted in vain to interest a jaded England in the discovery of the great river which furnished a water highway across the breadth of Africa. King Leopold was neither tired nor obtuse. He secured Stanley's services till the end of the century by a handsome retainer. It is needless to dwell on the untiring energy with which he created a chain of stations across the Congo valley, and obtained from the native chiefs treaties ceding to him their sovereign rights to whose validity a British Commissioner in 1884 was constrained to give reluctant testimony.

When the African Conference met at Berlin to-

wards the end of that year the Powers were confronted with a *fait accompli*. King Leopold had constructed a sort of dominion. He was at least the man in possession. Who was going to turn him out? Prince Bismarck and the French Government were determined that it should not be England. The Conference ended then with the legalizing of the Belgian ruler's position in the international sense, and by clever negotiation with the neighboring States he extended that position over a vast area of Africa far beyond the widest limits explored by either Stanley or any Belgian lieutenant. In less than eight years Leopold II had acquired a colony as large as Europe, omitting Russia. He acquired it almost without firing a shot, and the diplomatists, dazed by his audacity, left the Prussian capital with the secret solace, "Well, he will never keep it!" They were wrong; he did.

The King's achievement was too great for his own subjects. In Brussels the gift of a ready-made colony was received with fear and anxiety. Had it been a little one, it might have been accepted on the ground that it did not mean much, that its possession could not possibly offend any one, and that in the course of time the Belgian people might adapt themselves to the new situation. But this colony, brought back by the King's plenipotentiaries in their portfolio, was almost a continent, a pearl of great price among Tropical lands, and a recent bone of contention among the Great Powers. The Belgians of 1885 would have

nothing to do with the gift. Their Constitution was passed for home use. They preferred the freedom from anxiety without a colony, to unknown trouble and worry with one. They candidly admitted their ignorance in the matter, and professed no avidity to learn. The most they would do was to assent to their King taking the problem on his own shoulders as Sovereign of the Congo, and in that capacity he ruled it from 1885 to 1908.

It would be quite outside the purpose of this chapter to describe even in summary those twenty-three years of personal rule. What concerns our present topic is to note that Belgian opinion underwent a complete change on the subject in that period. Three main causes contributed to modify the views of 1885, and to convert the indifference of that year into the pride and pleasure of owning a valuable possession which was the dominant sentiment in 1908. These causes were the sacrifice of many noble Belgian's lives in the Arab campaigns, the sinking of a considerable sum of money by the several grants in aid made by the Belgian Government to the Congo, and the evidence acquired as to the great wealth of the African possessions in vegetable and mineral produce. For these reasons the Belgian public were not merely willing but in a hurry to take off their King's hands the Colony at which they had looked askance a quarter of a century before. Not British criticism but Belgian pressure compelled King Leopold to surrender the

separate rôle of absolute monarch in Africa which in his closing years he undisguisedly hoped to retain with life.

When the Belgian Government and Parliament in 1908 took over the Congo State, they became for the first time a Colonial Power, and as they introduced at once a new system and new principles, the experiment was invested with double interest. While some critics have been complaining, unreasonably as every candid person will admit, that the new system has not been introduced with sufficient rapidity to please them, I would draw attention here and also in Belgium to some practical matters that in moments of keen controversy escape notice. The first matter is the probability of Belgium's succeeding as well in her colonizing mission under the new laws as King Leopold did by his own will in defiance of everybody. If she does not succeed in her mission, she will place her colony in graver jeopardy than it was in, let me say, in 1904, when the British Government was inclined to push matters to extremities. For the Belgian people the motto should be "Success at all costs."

For running a colony successfully during the stages when it is admitted that it can not pay its way on its own resources two things are necessary — men and money. Under King Leopold an equilibrium had after the first fifteen years of recurrent deficit, been established by the profits made by the concessionaire companies, and in the, let us say, last ten years of per-

sonal rule a large surplus had been derived from the produce of the Congo plantations. But the concessions have been cancelled, the companies have disappeared, and the Government finds at its immediate disposal a very limited as well as uncertain revenue. This revenue is for the present quite disproportionate to the work that has to be performed. As Belgian public opinion had to be coaxed and propitiated in every way to make the taking over of the Congo as nearly unanimous as possible, one of the official assurances given was that it would cost the country nothing. The Congo was a sound going concern with a good surplus. At the moment when this was said the statement was perfectly true, but the institution of reforms has eliminated, as we shall see, some of the most profitable and easily garnered sources of revenue.

The new Colonial Minister, M. Renkin, whose zeal in the cause of reform on the Congo deserves full recognition, realized the position, and his first budget was remarkable for the boldness with which, ignoring the possibility of a deficit, he sanctioned an expenditure far exceeding anything attempted by his predecessors. As the reward of his courage the price of rubber rose on the international market by over sixty per cent, thus averting the necessity of issuing a new Colonial loan.

The Budget for 1909 was fixed at \$7,223,907, but as this was a transition year, the finances of the new

régime really commence with the year 1910. The ordinary expenditure for 1910 was estimated in the Budget at \$8,074,162, and the extraordinary at \$6,703,355. The extraordinary expenditure was to be provided for by the issue of Treasury Bonds running for a period of not more than five years. It was estimated that the ordinary revenue would bring in \$7,941,061, thus leaving only a small deficit. The principal items of regular expenditure are set forth as follows:

Administration in Africa.....	\$1,406,882
Public Force (military).....	1,442,440
Marine (transport).....	404,776
Health .....	165,240
Public Works.....	188,900
Customs and Fiscal Service.....	426,719
Agriculture .....	328,389
Mines .....	233,010
Upkeep of Domain.....	1,049,256
Justice .....	368,096
Service of the Debt.....	1,306,016

The items of the extraordinary expenditure include the following:

Creation of Agricultural and Breeding Establishments .....	\$ 400,000
Divers Public Works.....	3,385,580
Katanga Subsidy.....	300,000
Occupation of lands in Katanga.....	800,000
New Battery at Shinkakassa.....	400,000
New Boats.....	345,330
Second Annuity of Special Fund for \$10,000,000 to King Leopold.....	660,000

With regard to the last-named item, King Albert, declining to derive any personal benefit therefrom, caused the first annuity to be treated as the nucleus of a Pension Fund for those who have served on the Congo, which was greatly needed, and the second to



be applied in the purchase of steamers. The principal items of revenue were the following:

Customs .....	\$1,411,311
Ivory (sale of).....	629,200
Rubber (sale of).....	2,679,500
Rubber (tax on).....	259,000
Mines .....	504,000
Native taxes.....	400,000

As compared with the figures of 1909, mines and ivory show an increase, and rubber, despite its higher market value, a decrease. Customs show a rise of fifteen per cent, and the new export duty promises to prove a valuable addition to the revenue. For the first time, too, a tax paid by the natives in cash figures in the record.

The public debt of the Congo in 1910 amounted to \$24,167,040 (bonds actually issued), and the interest for the year to about \$920,000, while \$386,016.20 figured for redemption.

Allowing for the fact that several of the sources of revenue are of an expanding order and that the assets left by the late administration are likely to prove of great value, the financial outlook for the Congo Colony is bright and encouraging. It ought not to be very long before the Government will be able to raise the sum expended in Africa to ten million dollars per annum.

We come now to the question of the men. In 1909 the total staff of officials in Africa numbered 1,636. They were subdivided as follows:

Governor-General .....	1
Vice-Governor-Generals .....	3
State Inspectors.....	4
Commander of Public Force.....	1
Secretaries .....	5
Magistrates .....	60
Commissioners, etc.....	31
Chiefs of Zone.....	55
Officers of Force.....	175
Engineers .....	20
Doctors, etc.....	47
Postal Services.....	41
Captains of Steamers.....	51
Forest Service, etc.....	54
Unspecified .....	1,088
Total .....	1,636

In addition to the strictly State service 213 were employed on the Great Lakes railways, and seventy-six under the Katanga Special Committee, which is in political charge of the province. These officials are not exclusively Belgians. This will be understood when it is stated that there were in all only 1,722 Belgians in the whole of the Congo in 1908, and included in this total are at least 322 priests, sisters of mercy, women and children. The proportion of Belgians to non-Belgians seems to be about sixty per cent. For instance, of the sixty magistrates in the last table thirty-five were Belgians, eleven Norwegians, nine Italians, one Dane, one Roumanian, one French, and two Swiss.

The slow and slight increase in the white population of the Congo is a disturbing and discouraging fact. The following table gives the number of Belgians and non-Belgians in the years named:

Year	Belgians	Non-Belgians	Total
1900	1,318	886	2,204
1901	1,465	881	2,346
1902	1,417	948	2,365
1903	1,442	1,041	2,483
1904	1,410	1,101	2,511
1905	1,501	1,134	2,635
1906	1,587	1,173	2,760
1907	1,713	1,230	2,943
1908	1,722	1,217	2,939

Among non-Belgians the numerical order of nationalities was—

Swedes .....	190
Italians .....	181
Portuguese .....	143
Dutch .....	119
English .....	118
Swiss .....	90
Germans .....	63
Americans .....	55
Russians .....	55
French .....	51
Norwegians .....	48
Danes .....	29
Grand Duchy.....	29
Greeks .....	11
Austrians .....	9
Australians .....	8
Canadians .....	8
Transvaalers .....	5
Turks .....	1
Servians .....	1
Mexicans .....	1
Bulgarians .....	1
Argentina .....	1

---

1,217

Of these the British subjects and the Americans are either missionaries, or engineers and prospectors. There are none in the State service. The Portuguese, Germans, Greeks, and minor divisions are traders.

The Swedes, Italians, Norwegians, Danes, and Swiss are exclusively in the State service — so are the majority of the Dutch, French, and Luxembourgish. At one time there were over 500 Italian officers in the State service, but the pay was low and there was no chance of promotion, so the majority resigned and retired on the expiration of their first engagement. The point of these statistics is that at least forty per cent of the 1,636 functionaries, from the highest to the lowest grade, are non-Belgians and have to be recruited where they can be obtained. It has always been the practice of the Belgians to refrain from engaging either French or Germans, and although Englishmen were utilized in the early years, none have been employed for a very long time, and it is unlikely that any will be engaged in the future. The idea is that citizens of small States are the most suitable for another small State to employ, and the services rendered by the Scandinavians, Danes, and Swiss have been invaluable and beyond all praise.

The Congo having become a Belgian colony, it is natural that one of the principal objects of the new administration should be to make the service more and more exclusively Belgian, and with this object in view the salaries for those serving in Africa have been raised to an amount sufficient to attract fully-qualified men. The new pension scheme is also another attraction. While the special services, like the transport, can be left to non-nationals (the captains of the steam-

ers are exclusively Scandinavians), the tendency to place the general civil and military administration in the hands only of Belgians will become more marked. The officers of justice are, however, likely to remain of mixed nationalities as at present, for it is considered that this intermixture gives the Courts a greater appearance of impartiality. At all events, the remorseless critic cannot get up an agitation against Belgian judges in the Congo when they sit with a Norwegian or an Italian beside them.

Another great reform is the careful selection of the volunteer for the Congo before he is allowed to proceed to Africa. Formerly a man had only to offer to go out to be accepted and shipped off at once. It is quite certain that such a candidate possessed no special aptitude for work in the Tropics, and it was a miracle if he turned out to be any good at all. This description applies to the rank and file, and not to the comparatively few officers of the Belgian army who went out on "special mission" and helped to raise the tone of the service generally. It is now hoped to raise the standard all round to a level with the special men under the old system. There is another improvement. Formerly the men sent out were untrained; if it were the case of a second engagement and the applicant had a good record, it was a cause of much rejoicing, for it was realized that some one useful had been secured.

But now this loose system has been radically al-

tered; yet it is only fair to say that the change began under the late King who founded, in the last years of his rule, the School of Tropical Medicine in Brussels, the Colonial College, the Colonial Museum at Tervueren, and the World-School, which was to have been at the same place. All these institutions, with the exception of the last named, which has been temporarily dropped, are in active work. No doctor or veterinary surgeon is allowed to go to the Congo until he has passed through the School of Tropical Medicine, in connection with which there is a hospital at Watermael for invalids from the Congo. The student has therefore training in practice as well as in theory. There were forty doctors at this school in 1909, of whom twenty-three were Italians, thirteen Belgians, two Norwegians, one English, and one French. Their special study is the treatment of the terrible malady called "sleeping sickness."

In the year named the course at the Colonial College was followed by twenty-five commissioned officers, eighty-three clerks and former agents, and nineteen non-commissioned officers. The consequence of this improved system is not merely that trained men are now sent out in lieu of untrained, but that the candidates themselves take a more serious view of their mission. Formerly men went to the Congo to a large extent to escape from debt; now it is to begin a fine career. Evidence of the change is already visible in the returns of mortality among officials. The

percentage of deaths is little more than half what it was a few years ago—the figures being 4.60 per cent in 1908 as against 7.9 in 1901. The tours of King Albert and M. Renkin through the Congo were specially intended to demonstrate that a visit to Central Africa did not cut short one's life, and their example could not fail to embolden the timid.

The Colonial Museum at Tervueren is a splendid monument of the successful work accomplished on the Congo. The building is a magnificent structure placed in one of the most charming spots round Brussels, and the collection gives a complete picture of the ethnology, fauna, and natural products of Central Africa. Admirably arranged by its distinguished Director, Baron de Haulleville, author of the best work on the colonizing aptitudes of his fellow-countrymen, the student of the development of the Dark Continent will find here the most instructive object-lesson that could be desired. The *Annales*, or journal, published periodically under the Director's editorship, contain information of a high scientific value.

There is one question connected with the Belgian Congo of great interest. Can it be made a White Man's Colony? For the greater part of the territory which is subtropical the idea is not entertained, but in the southern provinces, notably Katanga, the conditions of climate and surroundings approximate to those of Rhodesia. Here the discoveries of great mineral riches provide an attraction to the immigrant

that does not exist in any other part of the Belgian colony. The pioneers of the mining movement have never ceased to represent that Katanga could maintain a large white resident population, but the Government has been obliged to proceed with great circumspection, more especially because there is one undeniable peril. This is the presence of the tse-tse fly. Even the parts of Katanga where it is not found are often rendered inaccessible by being environed by tse-tse infected districts through which cattle could not pass. The Government has established some experimental farms in districts immune from the scourge, and has lately sent out a small colony composed of constabulary to form the nucleus of a white settlement. But it is a question that can only be settled by care and caution, and perhaps not at all until the tse-tse fly has been exterminated or cattle successfully inoculated against its at present deadly sting.

The following are the statistics of trade for 1909 and the previous five years. This table shows only the "*commerce special*," that is to say, exports of Congo produce and imports for use or consumption in the Congo. There is in addition a large transit trade, chiefly to the French Congo, with which we need not trouble the reader.

Year	Imports	Exports
1904 .....	\$4,668,800	\$10,378,200
1905 .....	4,015,000	10,606,400
1906 .....	4,295,600	11,655,600
1907 .....	5,036,400	11,779,000
1908 .....	5,317,200	8,674,400
1909 .....	4,425,398.80	11,233,400



The decline in the exports of 1908 was due to the fall in the market value of rubber, and the recovery in 1909 to the rise in price to its old figure or even higher. Belgium provided or took herself in 1909 \$2,101,338 of the imports and \$10,417,139.80 of the exports. Taking a general view of the commercial situation over a period of the last six years, the progress is minute, but this should be regarded as evidence not of the limited resources of the Congo colony, but of the deliberate purpose of the Belgian authorities under both régimes to proceed with great care and caution. Those who have studied the colonial problem in Belgium hold the opinion that the success so far achieved has been due to the guiding principles of not attempting too much. Still the weak points in the situation remain (1) the small white colony all told, (2) the uncertainty as to the revenue, (3) and the apparent non-expansion of trade.

Under the new conditions created by the canceling of the charters of the Concessionnaire Companies, the abolition of forced labor, and the substitution of payment in money instead of payment in goods to the blacks, it will be more difficult to establish an equilibrium in the finances. The surest way of doing so is to multiply the resources of the colony, which can only be accomplished by the introduction of foreign capital into the country. The Belgians, whose success up to the present has been far greater than any one could have ventured to predict in 1884, have now to

decide whether they will encourage outside co-operation in dealing with the development of Central Africa, or continue to run it on the old exclusive lines. The opening of the several zones to free trade, which will be completed in another year, is an indication that co-operation will be invited and no longer repelled.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### CONCLUSION

**E**IGHTY years have elapsed since Belgium became by her own efforts in the first place, and with the support of England and France in the second, an independent, self-governing, and clearly defined kingdom, occupying a position of transcendent importance for all concerned in the maintenance of the balance of power in Western Europe. For England in particular the preservation of the national integrity of the Netherlands is a vital necessity. Under no circumstances must Belgium and Holland be allowed to pass into the hands or under the control of Germany. Antwerp might be made a pistol directed at the heart of England, said Napoleon, and if this was true in the days of sailing ships, it is incalculably more true in an age of steam, electricity, and aeronautic achievement.

In those eighty years Europe has greatly changed, but the general change is small compared to that in Belgium herself. The Belgium in which Leopold I was invited to rule was an undeveloped country possessing little capital and inhabited by a people rendered so cautious by long and bitter experience that they might be described as timid. It made its national

debut under the protection of the two Western Powers, and a state of tutelage is not the one most calculated to develop heroic qualities in a people. But there were other perils to national progress from the agreement of the Five Great Powers (Italy not then having been born) to leave Belgium outside the range of their ambitions. The sense of being protected by the solemn pledge of Europe might have bred ease and laziness. The citizens of the new State might have been so rejoiced with the novelty of independence as to enjoy the present in oblivion of the future. They might have reveled in the long freedom without thinking of the duty and difficulty of preserving it. Foreign guarantees are transient, the only sure bulwark of the existence of a nation, great or small, is its own resolution backed up by careful and wise preparations for the evil day of peril during the long years of peace.

This reproach cannot be addressed to the Belgian people. They concentrated their attention on the development of their little country, and they labored with set purpose and a single mind to place it in the van of European industrial and intellectual progress. At first the movement was slow—too slow some impetuous critics observed—and the attention and efforts of the people were concentrated at home. No foreign adventure would have tempted the generation which died out with the first king. The present of an El Dorado as a colony would have been rejected, although a few enlightened minds were beginning to

realize that some day or other the country would need outlets for its rapidly increasing population. But the development of Belgium came first. Not till its plains presented an unbroken expanse of cultivation, and its workshops and factories were working at full pressure did Belgians generally begin to think that some attention should be paid to expansion beyond the limits of their narrow borders.

By that time Belgium had accumulated no inconsiderable amount of capital. Her financial leaders took their place in the influential fraternity which controls the money markets of the world and which has been designated "*la haute finance*." The national savings were invested with some losses, but on the whole with great profits in South America, Russia, and China (to mention only a few of Belgium's spheres of interest). The growth of capital led to closer relations with Paris, and Brussels has become almost an agency or branch of the French metropolis in financial matters. It is sometimes said that French influence in Belgium has declined (and I for one am far from denying the truth of the assertion), but it is supreme in the circles of "*la haute finance*."

The acquisition and accumulation of capital, the participation in important World affairs chiefly in combination with France and Russia, and finally the possession of a great colonial territory, which has apparently excited the envy of onlookers, all these have produced a change in Belgian character and ways of

looking at things that is not generally allowed for. It is no longer safe or prudent to speak of the Belgian nation as timid, self-diffident, and afraid to accept responsibility. It would be nearer the truth to say that they have become a trifle venturesome, a little overbold, and not afraid to enter into competition with the great ones of the earth. Perhaps they have gone a little too far in this direction, but the Government that attempts to treat them *de haut en bas* will soon find itself thwarted in its designs by the aroused sense of dignity of the governing classes in modern Belgium. The worst consequence of the assumption that Belgium has stood still since the days of the London Conference is that there are always other Governments ready not merely to flatter, but also to promise support in the event of aggression. The confidence of the Belgian Foreign Office in itself is great enough, but it is rendered infinitely greater by the conviction that it does not lack friends, and the most serious consequence of all, resulting from miscalculation in political effort, and from wilful blindness to the magnificent progress of Belgium in all the essentials of prosperity and stability, is that it is driven to take its friends from the wrong quarters.

With regard to the home politics of Belgium a foreign observer must be careful in expressing any sweeping opinion. Party passion runs undeniably high, and the gulf separating Catholic and Socialist is very wide and deep. At times revolution seems in

the air, and with revolution would come such a change in the condition of things in the country that it might lose its integrity and independence. But many Belgians who speak with full knowledge and authority warn outsiders from forming what may seem logical conclusions about the conflicts of Parties in their country. They admit that political feuds become bitter, that the partisans are noisy—it is admittedly a Belgian characteristic—and that sometimes violence seems imminent; but they add these Belgians know just when to stop. They will draw back when they see peril from their clamor and excess to the national existence. That assurance is worth bearing in mind, although it does not cover all the possibilities of the situation. It meets the case while the Catholic party remains in office, but it is not at all clear what would follow from the advent to power of a Liberal-Socialist ministry, and the majority now behind the party in power is very small.

Looking beyond the question of party contests it is probably true that the precautions taken against a Socialist upheaval, with which the Legislative Chamber is periodically threatened, have been sufficient to assure the preservation of society, and no doubt the new army organization will also contribute to the same result. But at the same time there is almost as much danger in the Catholic party retaining a monopoly of office as there is from the other side coming in. The Belgian system of electing representatives is one

of the fairest that has been devised by human skill, but its merits are obscured by the indisputable result that it has given one side a long and unbroken lease of power. This fact alone weakens its claims to perfection and strengthens the demand for the change to the simple procedure of "one man one vote" or "universal suffrage." The abolition of the plural vote will be a serious blow to Conservatism, and its effects will only be mitigated by extending the suffrage to women whenever the change takes place. Even on the Catholic side of the Chamber the view is beginning to prevail that in the next political crisis, which is probably not far off, the plural vote in its present form will have to go.

But to the outsider the recent developments in the Flemish movement seem more alarming as a menace to the stability of Belgium than the feuds of Catholic and Socialist deputies. So long as the Flemish demands were confined to redress of their own grievances, and to the establishment of their own position on a footing of equality with the Walloons there was no serious objection to be made, but all this was gained half a century ago and ratified by a second triumph twenty-five years later. The latest efforts of the Flemish party are offensive and not merely defensive. They are seemingly bent on a campaign of aggression into Walloon or quasi-Walloon territory, the reasons of which are still obscure. And this forward movement has raised a volume of irritation and indignation



among the Walloons that would not be credited by any one who had not seen a meeting of French-speaking Belgians discussing the latest Flemish demands.

Whatever the advocates of minor races may say to the contrary, language is the true connecting link of a realm, and the attempt to revive half or wholly dead languages, if they were ever anything better than dialects, becomes a menace to the State in proportion as the language in common use is weakly or strongly established. In Belgium there are the two languages which have hitherto been on a fairly equal footing so far as numbers were concerned. But the Flemings are increasing at a greater rate in numbers and prosperity than the Walloons, and the swing of the pendulum will be increasingly in their favor. They are now displaying an intention to make the most of this superiority and to show their adversary no quarter. It is not surprising that the Walloons are up in arms and are showing resentment. The champions of Flemish, which is only low German, and which in the course of a few generations might be converted by a German Government into a very passable high German, have now embarked on an undertaking aiming apparently at absorbing the populous parts of Belgium hitherto included in Walloon Belgium, and if the plain brutal truth must be told, their success seems far from impossible.

There is no doubt something more behind the Flemish movement than meets the eye. If it is only

a party move to increase the Conservative forces in a country where the disruptive forces of Republicanism and Socialism are in active operation, the stability of the kingdom may be rather increased than diminished by it. But it is possible that there is another and more sinister explanation. German statesmen have always carefully watched and taken the greatest interest in the Flemish movement. German influence has long been in the ascendant in Antwerp, and the sympathetic attitude of the Berlin Cabinet in the Congo controversy has not failed to make a considerable impression in bureaucratic circles in Brussels. Belgian ministers are probably not aware that Prussia expects to be paid for services rendered and with interest; but as no demand has yet been made of this nature the grateful sense remains unalloyed. The Flemish movement is in its essence an anti-French movement, and if it succeeds in weakening French influence in Belgium it must to that extent promote and strengthen the interests and influence of Germany.

There are two reasons for the outburst of an anti-French feeling in Belgium. The first of these is the new religious laws, which amount to a persecution of the Church, and have made the French Government most unpopular among the true Catholics of Flanders. Nobody in this country or in France seems to realize the new sentiment of dislike for France and French ideas that has sprung up in Flanders within the last ten years. The dread of the spread of French influ-

ence was always a sort of bugbear in Flanders; it has now given place to aversion and, the word must be written, contempt.

If the religious question has moved the masses, it is political considerations that sway the minds of those in power. There is a Republican Party in Belgium. It must exist and take itself seriously when M. Vandervelde shouts the fact in the presence of his King, but a Republic could only exist in Belgium as a kind of satellite of that of France. If Belgian Republicans look to France, it is only natural that those Belgians who are not Republicans should look elsewhere, and that means to Germany. The situation has not yet become acute, but unless the feud between Flemings and Walloons can be arrested, serious consequences threatening if not the very existence of, at least the present order of things in, Belgium must follow within no remote future.

If there has been a deeper purpose in these pages than to describe a country and people among whom I have lived and for whom I have the highest admiration and regard, it is to do what may be done by individual effort towards drawing the attention of the British public to the affairs of Belgium with the view of increasing mutual sympathy. The national alliance between the peoples of Flanders and England is the oldest in Europe. There are no two people more alike. Their most cherished institutions, those of civic liberty, are the same. The English character has been

leavened by considerable immigration of Flemish settlers since the twelfth century. Clouds have arisen from time to time on the horizon of their relations, but they have cleared away. The truest of Belgian patriots, whether he be Walloon or Fleming, knows in his heart of hearts that England—apart from the efforts of himself and his fellow-countrymen—is the one sure bulwark of Belgium's independence. The appreciation of that great responsibility should on both sides of the Channel stifle criticism and promote regard.

